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609

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609

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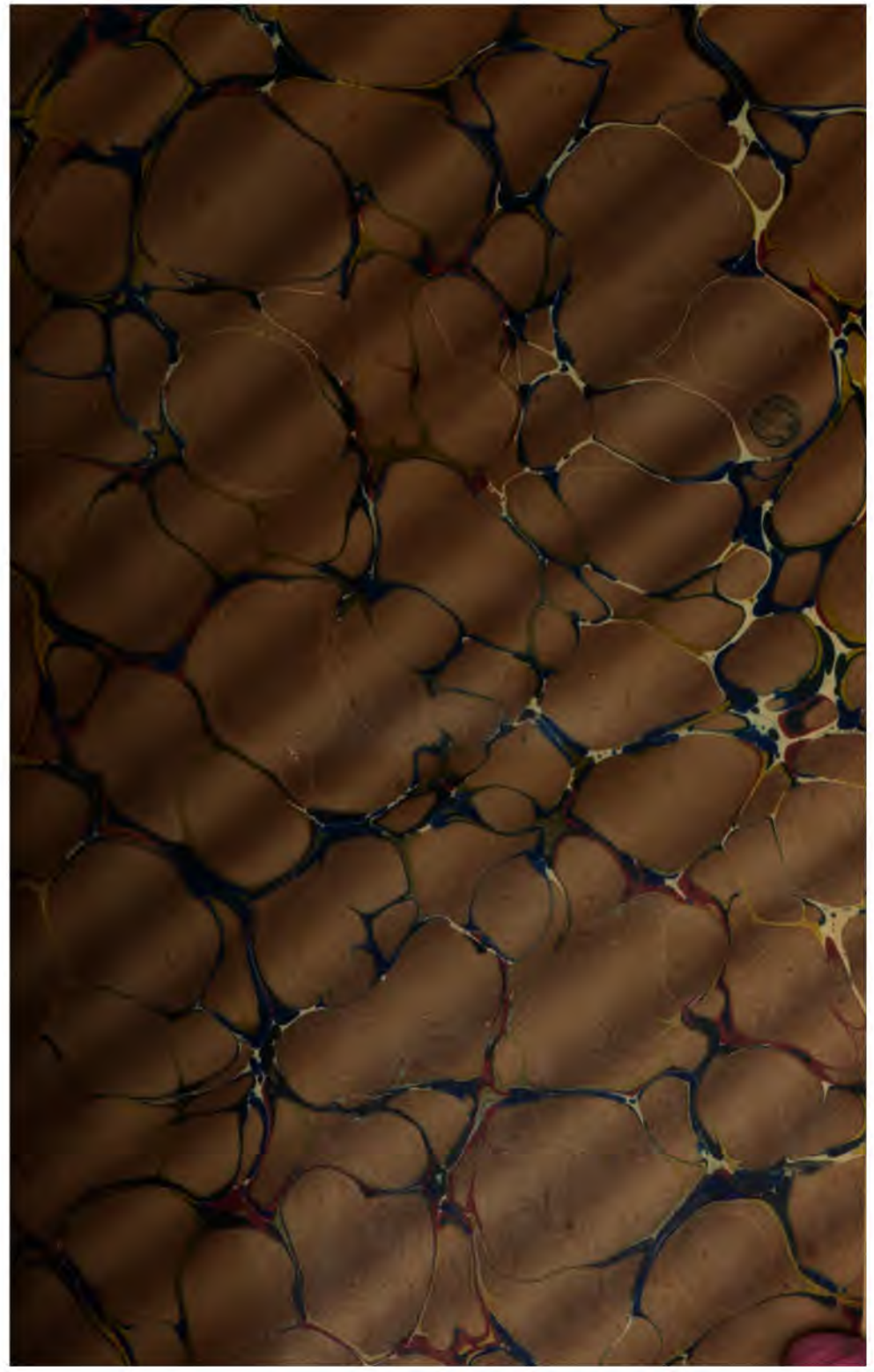
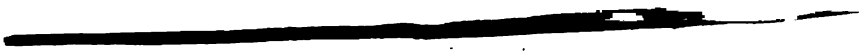
INSTITVTIO THEOLOGICA
Ps. CXIX.
160.
כדברך
הבינני
JOH. XVII.
17.
ὁ λογος
ὁ σος
αληθεια
ΑΚΡΟΓΩΝΙ
ΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ.





THE

THEOLOGICAL

AND

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

OF THE LATE REV.

WILLIAM JONES, M.A.

MINISTER OF NAYLAND, SUFFOLK.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF HIS

LIFE AND WRITINGS

BY WILLIAM STEVENS, ESQ

A NEW EDITION.

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CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

PAGE

REMARKS on the Principles and Spirit of a Work, entitled The Confessional 1

ZOOLOGIA ETHICA: A Disquisition concerning the Mosaic Distinction of Animals into clean and unclean .. 97

Additional Remarks 168

A Dissertation on the Offering up of Isaac by Abraham 177

An Enquiry into the Circumstances and moral Intention of the Temptation of Jesus Christ in the Wilderness 205

Three Dissertations on Life and Death..... 255

Reflections on the Life, Death, and Burial of the Patriarchs 301

A Disquisition concerning the Metaphorical Usage and Application of Sleep in the Scriptures 317

A free Enquiry into the Sense and Signification of the Spring; as it is described in the Song of Solomon .. 341

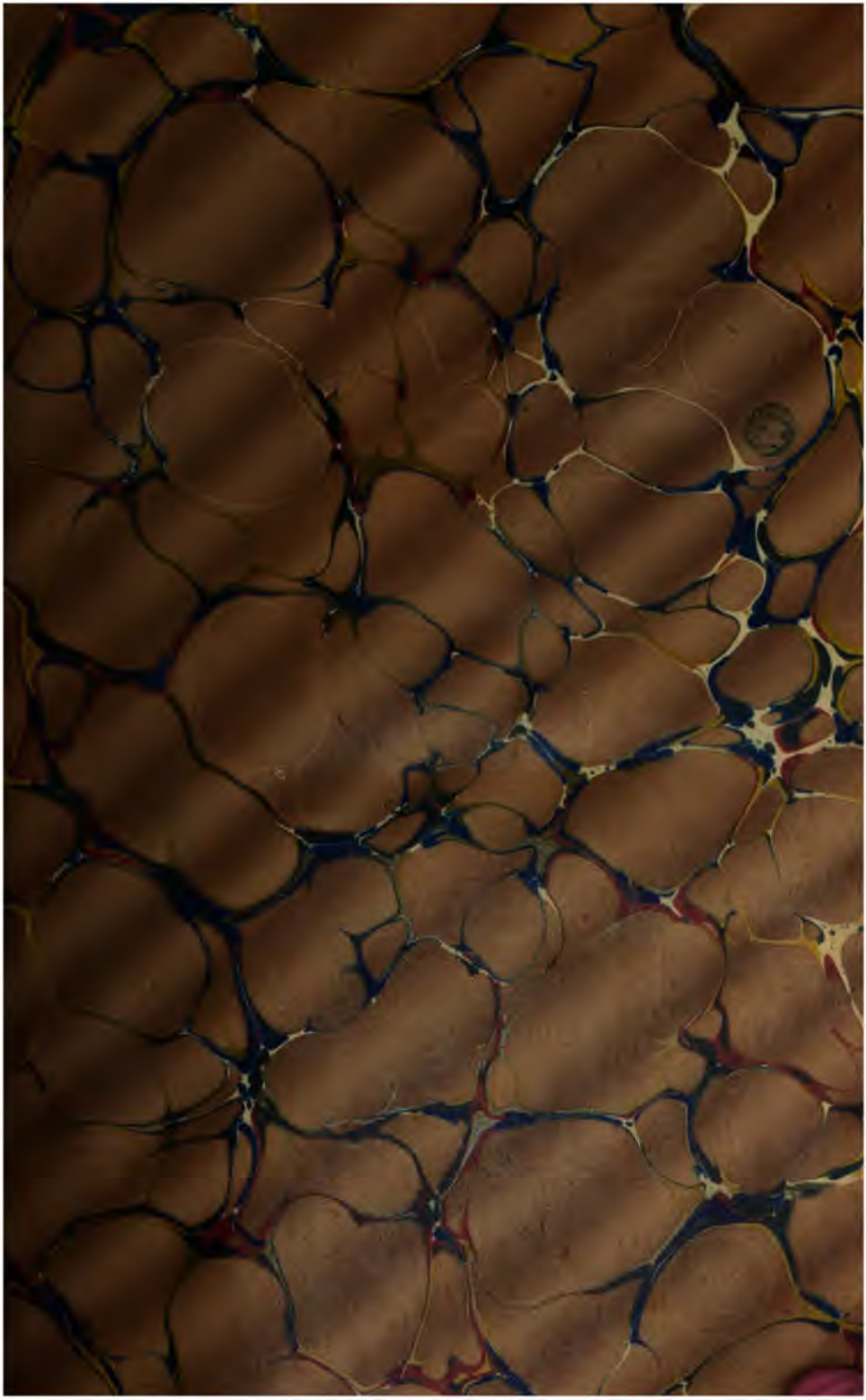
An Essay on Confirmation 375

Reflections on the Growth of Heathenism among modern Christians, in a Letter to a Friend at Oxford..... 393

609

יהוה

INSTITVTIO THEOLOGICA
Ps CXIX
JOH XVII
ΑΚΡΟΓΩΝΙ
ΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ.



guage. There are a set of disputants who are distinguished as the *sons of truth and liberty-worthies, whose services, under all disadvantages, have been so great an honour and ornament to the church* *. In this class of *worthies* we find Dr. *Sykes*, who undertook to hold up the credit of *Arian subscription*, in answer to Dr. *Waterland*. He is farther ornamented with the honourable titles of *an acute writer—this ingenious person—the ingenious author of the* Case †. We shall see how justly Dr. *Sykes* is celebrated for his acuteness and ingenuity, if we venture to take a nearer view of him, 1. as a *reasoner*, 2. as a *writer*, and 3. as an *historian*, or relater of facts.

When Dr. *Waterland* had charged the *Arian* party with fraud and prevarication in subscribing *Trinitarian* articles; his adversaries endeavoured to recriminate, accusing the orthodox clergy with subscribing *Calvinistical* articles, although they were well known to dissent from *Calvin's* doctrine. Dr. *Waterland* clears the orthodox, by shewing that the articles of the Church of *England* were purposely framed to a *neutral* sense; neither affirming nor denying *Calvin's* doctrine, that offence might be taken by neither party; and he affirms it to have been "abundantly proved, "that the articles are NOT CALVINISTICAL." Here Dr. *Sykes* changes the state of the question, and declares *Waterland* not to have been convinced of his own proofs of the ANTICALVINISM of the articles ‡. *Not calvinistical* is altered into *anticalvinistical*. The former of these terms implies *neutrality*, the latter *opposition*. Dr. *Waterland's* defence rests entirely upon this plain distinction, which Dr. *Sykes* either did or did not understand; and I shall not stay to enquire which part of the dilemma will consist with his *acuteness* and *ingenuity*. In another place, he sets down the words "well proved to be *Anticalvinian*," referring to them as if they were the genuine words of Dr. *Waterland:* but, in the place referred to, it is only said to be "well proved "that our articles *were not drawn up by* Calvin's *scheme* §."

* Confess. p. 171. 173.
† Ibid. p. 186. 190.
‡ See *Sykes's* Case of Subs. p. 31, 32.
§ See *Waterland's* Supplement, p. 51, and *Sykes's* Reply, p. 36, 37.

The same mistake occurs in other places, not worth our notice.

All this will appear less wonderful, when it is compared with the same author's account of the Trinity in Unity, which he calls, "Dr. *Waterland's* notions of three equally "supreme intelligent *agent*, and of one intelligent *agents* *." But neither Dr. *Waterland*, nor any other Christian, ancient or modern, orthodox or heterodox, did ever believe the Holy Trinity to be three and one *in the same respect*. *Arians* of all sizes have indeed made a common practice of *imputing* this absurdity to us; though they have generally been content with making us weak enough to believe Three Gods (in the plural) to be one God (in the *singular*.) But Dr. *Sykes* is not satisfied without carrying quite out of the precincts of grammar, having invented a new transformation of the terms into *three agent*, and *one agents;* which if the Printer can get over without an error of the press, he will have better fortune with his types, than I have had with my pen.

If we consider the *Doctor* as an *orator*, we shall find his style distinguished by a certain inharmonious repetition, which shews the writer to have laboured under the most extreme poverty of diction, of which, the following are a few examples—*so apparently so*—this *is just such a pretty way of reasoning as* this. *This gave me occasion to demand what were the criteria by* which *we might judge* which *those particular articles are,* which *leave a latitude* †.

As an *historian*, he imagined himself to have found Dr. *Waterland* guilty of a gross anachronism; and while he is correcting him for it, observes, with an air of triumph, that *Samuel Hubert's* book "was written forty years after the "articles were made, and near forty after *Cranmer* was *rot*-"*ten in his grave* ‡. If it be remembered that archbishop *Cranmer* was a person of the first ecclesiastical character in this kingdom, a man of exact learning, great piety, and venerable in the eyes of all good men, as a martyr to the

* See *Waterland's* Supplement, p. 33.

† See p. 42. 4. 33.

‡ *Waterl.* Suppl. p. 44.

protestant cause, the language with which his memory is here treated is consistent neither with decency nor charity, nor indeed with common humanity. But that this same *Cranmer* should be *rotten in his grave*, whom all the world knows to have been publicly burnt to ashes at a stake, and sent to Heaven in a fiery chariot, is a discovery, of which the whole merit is due to the acute Dr. *Sykes**. I do not take upon me to say, that this is the particular merit which recommended him to the author of the Confessional, for I rather suppose it to have been that of disbelieving the Creeds, which is a sufficient recommendation with him, who judges of every man's wisdom or folly, by first observing whether he is *for*, or *against* the church. In this practice he brings to my mind the character of *Georgius Trapezuntius*, a scholastic doctor of eminence in the 15th century.—*Aristotelis admirator summus; Platonis contemptor maximus.* When a critic is thus unhappily swayed by the *summus* on one side, and the *maximus* on the other, his accounts are to be taken with very great abatements. If his *admiration* and *contempt* are each of them misplaced, and have exchanged their proper objects, the matter cannot then be rectified by any discountings. This spirit of partiality hath filled the *Confessional* with malignant ridicule and fulsome panegyric, of which it is not necessary, in this place, to produce any more examples, because some of them will meet us of course in the ensuing Remarks: from which the reader may form a judgment of all the rest, as safely and surely as he may know the taste of sea-water, without being obliged to drink up the ocean.

It may be proper to observe, that the *Confessional* is referred to in its original form of the *first edition*; and it ought to be known, for the author's vindication, that these papers might have appeared many months ago, if politics, *&c.* had not taken off the Printer's attention from works of divinity.

* If the reader will please to consult a *Letter to the Common People*, published with the last edition of the *Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity*, he will find some account of another *acute writer*, who, in this author's vapouring style, is invested with all the terrors of controversial ability. See *Confess.* p. 320.

REMARKS

ON

THE CONFESSIONAL.

CHAPTER I.

A SHORT VIEW OF THE GROUNDS OF THIS AUTHOR'S DISPUTE AGAINST THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

When a controversy is started in which the spiritual interests of Christian people are nearly concerned, it is their duty to inquire, as far as they are able, into the real merits of the cause; and to consider the question, if possible, in the same naked and simple state in which it existed in the head of an author, before it was disposed according to the rules of art, and disguised under the rhetorical furniture of a large book, comprehending an hundred different subjects wrought up into one mass.

In conversation, it is not unusual to hear two persons disputing fiercely for a long time, without gaining an inch of ground on either side: because it is the practice of reasoners, who are deficient either in respect of a sound cause, an upright intention, or a clear head, to wander far and wide from the subject in debate. Every subject is so nearly related to other

subjects, that the mind of an undesigning reasoner will sometimes slide from one to another, without being sensible of it: but an artful man will rarely fail to be shifting about to all the adjuncts and relatives within his reach, till he can fix upon such as will enable him to make a plausible appearance. He that is in wrath with another, of whom he knows no evil, will asperse his character indirectly, by railing at his connexions, his friends, his family, his ancestors, his children, or even his country itself; all of which are but little to the purpose, and can only shew, that the accuser is equally irritated and unprovided.

In the accusation lately revived against our forms and doctrines by the Author of *The Confessional*, the real grounds of his discontent are comprehended in two short arguments: and I hope I shall be pardoned for throwing them into a logical form, because I do it merely for the sake of brevity, that I may save trouble to the reader as well as to the writer. The first of these arguments stands thus:

The Church of *Rome* hath established false doctrine;
The Church of *England* hath established false doctrine;
Therefore the Church of *England* wants *reformation* as much as the Church of *Rome*.

That the Church of *Rome* hath established false doctrine, and doth stand in need of reformation, is readily allowed by all Protestants, because it hath been demonstrated for these two hundred years: but the second proposition, on which the conclusion depends, is not true; and the author, as we shall see presently, waves the proof of it, supposing that we shall take it upon his bare word. Where this second proposition is *assumed*, as by the *Arians*, *Socinians*,

and the most corrupt part of the dissenters, the conclusion will be admitted.

The second argument may be expressed as follows:

The Church of *Rome* opposes the *reformation* of her doctrines;

The Church of *England* opposes the *reformation* of her doctrines;

Therefore the Church of *England* is as obstinate as the Church of *Rome*.

This conclusion is no better than the former, because the word *doctrines* is *equivocal* in the premises. In the first member of the argument, it signifies such doctrines as we *know* to be *false;* in the second, such as we can *prove* to be true; though this author is no admirer of them.

Every son of the Church of England hath a right to insist upon seeing a refutation of her doctrines as a *first step;* without which all popular harangues upon the expediency of a reformation, either not at all defined, or amounting to an utter abolition of the establishment, are but so many experiments upon his understanding, and ought to have no more influence than the flourishing of a pen in the air.

When the authority of the Church is called in question, this supposition, that *her doctrines are false,* is always at the bottom of the dispute, though not always visible: for no Protestant, under the character of a *believer,* could ever think of refusing to the Church of Christ an authority to secure what the Gospel itself hath already imposed upon all Christians. Nor was the authority of the Church ever questioned with any pious design, till it was evident to all men who would but open their eyes, that the Church had *invented* what she had power only to receive and preserve. If any fraud of this kind can be proved upon

the Protestant Church of *England*, her governors, it is to be hoped, will consider of it, and correct it: but then, indefinite accusations, expressed in the most loose and general terms, are not to be admitted for legal evidence. "Certain particulars," says this Author, "are *equally* proved to want reformation among Protestants *" as among the Papists. If you should be under any concern to know what these *particulars* are, and should ask a question which is of the last importance, and occurs naturally, instead of any direct answer you will meet with this evasion; "I forbear to give instances, though there are more than one at hand †:" as if that would have been a *digression*, which is the first step in the controversy. In another place it is affirmed, that the public is *grossly and notoriously wrong* ‡: how and where, the reader is left to conjecture as well as he can. Sometimes it is suggested to the populace, that many of superior character in the Church are as much convinced of the falsehood of our doctrines as the Author himself, if they would but as freely declare their minds. What they believe, and what they deny, we are still left to find out as before; but may suppose it to be somewhat not fit to be owned all at once. In the 56th page of his Preface, he takes some pains to raise the expectation of his readers, and threatens us with some great matter, which at last all vanishes in a smoke. He tells us of a certain private party, in which it was his hap to mention a *glaring inconsistency in the case of subscription to our established articles of Religion*, at which some *respectable* persons in the company *expressed the utmost surprise*. If it was his desire to be understood, and he really did think

* Pref. p. 13. Ed. 1. † Ibid. ‡ P. 3.

this matter capable of making any remarkable impression, he would have directed us how to find some explanation of his meaning; yet we are not given to know any thing farther of this *glaring inconsistency*, than that it makes *a part of* his *following work, though placed at some distance from the beginning*. In a book of 354 pages, 200 of them, at least, are *at some distance from the beginning*; so that we are still in the dark as before: for how *glaring* soever this inconsistency might appear in the Author's eyes, it is not bright enough to betray itself to others by its own light; neither do I know at this moment where to find it, unless he alludes to that *remarkable* and *notorious deviation* (as he calls it) from the *Athanasian* maxim, which is introduced at p. 319; the injustice and futility of which criticism hath been taken notice of upon another occasion *. At this *distance from the beginning* he ventures to open his design; declaring himself *neither afraid nor ashamed to call for a review of our Trinitarian forms*; and, in the course of his work, he refers to and recommends as oracular, though a professed enemy to all impositions, the opinions of *Clarke, Hoadley, Sykes, Clayton*, and some others of lesser note. But these things are spoken in such general terms, and with so small an appearance of argument, that the Author himself seems to be sensible how much he hath been wanting in this part of his undertaking; and observes, toward the *end* of his book, that "it may possibly be expected he should descend to particulars, and point out some of the principal objects of the reform he solicits †." In this he judges rightly: for it would

* See a Letter to the Common People, published with the third edition of the *Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity*, §. X.

† P. 336.

not only be a dangerous but a ridiculous step, to enter on the important work of reformation, without first being sure of what is amiss. But his subject, he tells us, "leads him only to *one* particular, the case of subscription to *human* Creeds and Confessions, and other ecclesiastical forms, which are required to be assented to, as being agreeable to the word of God." Subscription is indeed but one particular circumstance of our ecclesiastical discipline, and is good, bad, or indifferent, according to its object; but the Creeds, Articles, and ecclesiastical forms of worship to which it extends, do comprehend the whole system of our faith and religion, out of which he ought to have selected the obnoxious articles, and have shewed us plainly how far they disagree with the word of God. But in doing this, he must have exposed his own set of doctrines to be seen and examined by the public; a task neither promising nor agreeable, if we may judge by a certain shyness which hath produced those ambiguities and dodgings already mentioned. Therefore, he proceeds, as before, in general terms; observing, that "undoubtedly such of these" (Creeds and Confessions) "as have not this agreement with holy writ, ought not to be retained in the Church *." So we all say; though indeed we never heard of any Christian Creed or Confession which disagreed with the word of God in every article, as this observation supposes them to do. If any one article is *unscriptural*, that article ought to be reformed: but it will not *thence* follow, that the remaining thirty-eight which *are scriptural* should be all thrown aside in the lump, and subscription itself abolished. A political orator, might as well have argued from the inexpe-

* P. 336.

diency of the *American* stamp-act, to the repealing of all the English laws, and in favour of anarchy.

With this foundation the writer of the *Confessional* frames his conclusions, raises his exhortations, and proposes his conditions; allowing, with a pious sort of casuistry, which he may explain at some other opportunity, that although our forms do disagree with the word of God, "nevertheless, as something is due to the ignorance and prejudices of well-meaning people, it may not be expedient to discontinue the *use* of them all at once, provided proper endeavours are used to prepare the people for their removal at a seasonable time, by informing them wherein their disagreement with the Christian Scripture consists *." We thank him for this indulgence; but are of opinion, that this *disagreement* is what ought *now* to have been pointed out to us in *the Confessional;* because we shall make but an indifferent figure, if we have it to look for when our fences are all pulled down. And certainly it hath not appeared to us as yet, though we have read *Clarke's* Doctrine of the Trinity, *Sykes's* Case of Subscription, the Free and Candid Disquisitions, together with the *Essay on Spirit,* to whose old objections this Author hath added nothing but new calumnies, of which some account will be given in another place.

Our Church, as he would have it believed, now is, and always hath been, an enemy to reformation. She hath had many opportunities of improvement, and never been wise enough to embrace any one of them. It may, therefore, be worth our while to consider briefly how the Church is circumstanced, and what obligations she is under to such reforming claimants, as the Author of the Confessional.

* P. 336.

The Church having the oracles of truth committed to her, and being bound to provide in the best manner she can, as well for the edification of all her children as for her own peace and security as a society, extracts and recommends such articles of doctrine as she finds revealed to her in the holy Scripture: and in the course of her work expressly disclaims her own authority, as insufficient of itself to bind any *article of faith* upon the consciences of her members.

These doctrines then, thus extracted and recommended by the Church, as the *witness and keeper of holy writ*, either have the authority of the Scripture, or they have not. If they have, then her members are bound to receive them, not as the doctrines of the Church, but of the Scripture. And in this no man will say that the Church departs from her principle, or that the principle itself is unscriptural.

But on the other hand, if any doctrine so proposed by the Church has not the authority of the Scripture to support it, and the falsehood of it can plainly be proved by the same authority; then the Church, by her own principles, is obliged to attend to all such remonstrances as are made in a proper manner, and supported by proper evidence; as the remonstrances of learned, and pious, and reasonable men, will never fail to be. In several instances the Church hath actually submitted to do this. The invocation of saints, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the redemption of souls out of Purgatory by masses, the worship of images, which had been allowed and practised for many ages, were objected to, as contrary to the Scripture; and are now not only removed but protested against in the articles, as so many errors: which protestation (by the way) would fall with the articles,

and we should no longer be *Protestants*, unless it were by accident; at least we must be taken for such upon trust.

The Church of *Rome*, as her conduct hath unhappily proved, thought it more eligible to preserve her corruptions, than recede from her infallibility: but the Church of *England*, since the reformation, never did, nor doth now think it any reflection upon her wisdom and authority, that these errors were corrected upon her own principle, and she will without question, as she safely may, be ready to follow her own example in other cases, provided there shall appear to be as *sufficient reason* for so doing as for reforming the corruptions above mentioned.

But if any of her doctrines should be rescinded without *reason*, and her members released from their obligation to such things as are revealed in the Scripture, she would exceed her commission as dangerously by detracting from, as by adding to, the articles of the Christian faith. The Church cannot bind where God hath loosed; and it must be equally true, that where God hath bound us, the Church can have no authority to set us free. Were she to be guilty of such weak compliances, her true children would have as just a cause of complaint against her then, as her opponents, the *Arians*, Dissenters, and Freethinkers pretend to have now; and the Papists would object it to us, with great appearance of reason, that religion can have no firm footing when separated from the authority of the apostolical chair.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE RIGHT OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES TO ESTABLISH CONFESSIONS OF FAITH.

THE author's observations are ushered in, and the *right* of Protestant Churches is *prejudged*, by the following reflection,—that "there never yet was any instance of a prosperous usurpation destitute of advocates to lay in for it a claim of right and justice *." Perhaps not; yet *right* and *usurpation* are two different things. If the claim of the Church of *England* is to be suspected only because it hath met with advocates to defend it, the Gospel itself ought to have been suspected upon the same account ever since it was published. But let us answer this reflection with another, equally true and more to the purpose; that "there never yet was an instance of any establishment, how just and reasonable soever, which some men have not thought it their interest to assault with weak reasonings and false accusations."

When we are pleading in defence of established Confessions, our *fundamental position*, as he very justly allows, is this: "Every particular Church, considered as a society, has a right, as other societies have, to secure its own peace and welfare by all lawful means †." This position he would overthrow, by pretending that it proves too much; being sufficient, if admitted, to justify *all the persecutions of the Heathens against the Christians, and even the Popish Inquisition* ‡. But in this answer he is too much in haste

* P. 21. † P. 22. ‡ Ibid.

to recollect the terms of his own position; which affirms no more, than that the Church may secure its own peace and welfare by *lawful means*. Inquisitions and persecutions are *unlawful* means; therefore his consequence is not a just one. If it were, self-preservation would be such a very bad principle, that mankind should invent some way of providing against it (if any such provision can be made when self-preservation is given up;) and a society, if opposed, would have nothing to do but to be ruined, by resigning itself quietly to the will of its enemies.

There are no *means* but lawful and unlawful. The unlawful, by their own nature, are not to be made use of; nor the lawful, because the other will thereby be justified: and so we are to do nothing but suffer from *men of active spirits*, who will never lay themselves under that restraint which they would impose upon others. When this writer hath in view the propagation of his own opinions, he is florid and copious in defence of liberty; but in this answer he hath laid an ax to the root of it; for there can be no such thing as liberty, if societies are deprived of the benefit of self-preservation.

The use of lawful means hath been pleaded for, not to secure unlawful ordinances, but such only as are agreeable to the word of God. This, however, in his way of reasoning, makes no difference: for "the proviso, that Church-ordinances be *agreeable to the word of God*, will not help the Protestant Churches at all *." If this is true, all Protestant Churches are in a very woful condition: for there are but two sorts of authority, human and divine. The former is not sufficient of itself to authenticate articles of faith and

* P. 23.

doctrine; and if the latter is not, there is no authority left to which they can appeal. The Protestant Churches have laid it down as a principle, that all Christians are bound by the *word of God;* consequently, by what is *agreeable to the word of God:* and they have always imagined, that if this *agreement* were once allowed them, nothing could supersede the obligation of submitting to it, but the super-prophetical light of the Quakers, or the interposition of an infallible judge, such as they have at Rome.

Every Englishman, as a member of civil society, is bound by the law of the land; therefore, we say he is bound by the same law when applied to particular cases, and administered in the sentence of a magistrate: otherwise, he is bound and not bound at the same time. If it should be objected, that the sentence may deviate from the law, this is foreign to the case in hand; because we argue at present upon the *proviso,* that it is *agreeable to the law.*

The erring members of the Christian Church shew themselves to be what they are, by a misapplication of the word of God; which, St. *Peter* tells us, they *who are unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction* *. How is the Church to provide against their errors, but by another application of it? If not, we invest the enemies of the Church with a privilege which we deny to the Church herself, who hath at least as good, if not a better right to it. Neither the law of God, nor the law of the land, can administer themselves: and if they are not to be applied and interpreted, then they were made, not to condemn what is wrong, or justify what is right, but only to be looked at, and contradicted, in the way of *pri-*

* 2 Pet. iii. 16.

vate judgment.—But let us hear how he reasons in his own words.

"Established confessions" *(agreeable to the word of God)* "being human compositions, must either be subject to examination, by the private judgment of those who profess to make the written word of God the only rule of their religion, or else the Church must claim a right of interpreting the Scriptures" *(i. e.* of making ordinances *agreeable to the word of God)* "for all her members, exclusive of the rights of private judgment *."

If established confessions, notwithstanding their agreement with the word of God, may be over-ruled by private judgment, it must follow, that the Scripture itself may be over-ruled upon the same principle; unless it can be proved, that the word of God is changed into the word of man, by being transplanted into an established confession.

The Author supposes private judgment entitled to this prerogative, by making the written word the rule of its religion †; and as the Church certainly does the same, so far as her confession is *agreeable to the word of God,* there will arise, upon the same ground, a right of public judgment to society: which judgment, if it can be controlled by the judgment of an individual, the right here mentioned will be no right, and society will be no society. Unless this right, thus defined, is allowed to the Church, we must suppose the Scripture contrary to itself in respect of the same doctrines; for here we shall have

* P. 23.

† "The *Puritan* would be judged by the word of God. If he would speak clearly, he means himself, but is ashamed to say so; and he would have me believe him before a whole Church, that has read the word of God as well as he." Selden. T. T. p. 111. 3d edit.

private judgment, with the word of God in its hand, pleading against an agreement with the word of God; which is nonsense. And what will be the issue? Why, the Church cannot give us a rule of doctrine from the Scripture, because an individual is entitled to make his own use of it; and, as a society cannot receive a rule of doctrine from the private judgment of a single person, unless it be that of the pope, we are to have no public rule at all; consequently, that precept of the Apostle,—*let us all walk by the same rule*,—was unnecessary and groundless.

But he will say, the *written word* is a rule; meaning, as I presume, the Scripture in its *own terms*. Now, to say nothing against the bulk of the Scripture, as improper for a Creed or Confession, it is a rule which hath been applied with equal assurance to the heresy of *Arius*, the novel inventions of *Popery*, the antichristian philosophy of *Socinus*, the outrageous practices of the *Anabaptists*, and the absurd enthusiasm of the *Quakers*. That it may not be *so applied* by the teachers of this Church, the *Articles* are a system, in which the Scripture, as the only *rule of religion*, is particularly pointed against these and other errors. The rule is still the same as before; only the articles contain an application of it to some particular and necessary cases; without attending to which, this Church must actually be what the Papists represent it to be, a Babel of confusion; and Christianity itself would sink into a chaos. Experience teaches us, that without such an application the Scripture becomes no Scripture, when those men have the handling of it, whose heads are filled with the conceits of some heretical leader, and their hearts inflamed with an enthusiastic zeal of infusing them into others. This Author can play with it as he

pleases upon his own principles. If the Church ascertains a scriptural doctrine in short by some equivalent terms of her own, he can oppose to it the Scripture at large in its own terms: If the Scriptures are so express as to require no interpretation, he can have recourse to *different senses*, leaving the written word for private exposition. Thus he hath the advantage of the Church either way. He hath the merit of setting up the pure word of God against human inventions, and the convenience of adapting it at pleasure to other inventions of himself or his friends.

If a right of determining for all her members is allowed to the Church, he supposes this must *exclude the rights of private judgment.* But this doth by no means follow: for the Church hath a right of determining, so far only as she determines *agreeable to the word of God.* An individual can have no rights but what are grounded upon the same agreement with the word of God; therefore, it is absurd to set up one of these rights exclusive of the other, because they coincide, and are in effect but one and the same thing; though always with this difference, that the judgment of society is a judgment of *authority*, while private judgment is no more than a judgment of *discretion* or *opinion.* If this latter is what the Author contends for, it cannot be *excluded* by the decisions of any authority upon earth: for thoughts are free; and if they are absurd or injurious, they must be accounted for at last to the Searcher of all hearts. It will always be impossible, in the nature of things, to exclude such private judgment from examining and determining as it pleases, against all authority, divine as well as human. But then such private judgment will not be *authoritative*, or binding to others, but will and must be over-ruled in this world by the

acts of the society to which it hath joined itself: else there can be no such thing as government or society in the world.

This, indeed, is the genuine consequence of our Author's principle; for he makes private judgment not private but authoritative; asserting, that it "precludes the right of the Church to establish any thing without the previous consent of all her members *." Whence it follows, that society cannot stop the proceedings of an individual, but an individual may stop the proceedings of society, and that all the members of society are in a state of equality: whereas the very idea of a society implies a subordination in bodies corporate as in the body natural; and the Apostle, in the earliest state of the Christian Church, argues at large from one of these to the other, in the 12th chapter of his first epistle to the *Corinthians*. If this plan of the Author were to take place, and men should arise *speaking perverse things* as *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, to *overthrow the faith* of weak Christians, they must be admitted as judges in their own cause; and have it in their power to put a negative upon all their brethren, to prevent the establishment of any such regulations as might affect the well-being of their own perverse opinions: that direction too of the Apostle to the ministers of the Church,—*A man that is an heretic, reject* †; and that other to the people,—*Obey them that have the rule over you, whose faith follow* ‡, might be blotted out of the Scripture; for the latter would be useless, and the former impracticable.

This plan, however, will hardly consist with what the Author allows (or *seems* to allow) upon another occasion. "Single men," he says, "may be called

* P. 23. † Tit. iii. 10. ‡ Heb. xiii. 17.

upon to correct and even retract their doctrines, not only without offence, but in some cases with advantage to the *common faith* *." How can this be? for the *consent* of these *single men*, who are thus to be called upon, is necessary, before any *common faith* can be established. Without some *common faith*, by what standard are their doctrines to be judged of? And without some established constitution of the Church, who shall be the *persons* appointed to judge them? If the *common faith* is that revealed in the Scripture, it is equally pretended to by *Arians, Socinians, Quakers, Anabaptists*, and other Sectaries, amongst whom there is no community of sentiment. The Church, therefore, must apply this rule, without the consent of these *single men;* or all hope of *advantage* must be given up, and the *common faith* left to the mercy of its adversaries.

Here it is pleasant to observe the dexterity of some writers, who find it convenient, as the subject varies, to take both sides of the question. They have the art of saying things in such a manner, by the help of little qualifying clauses, that they shall not appear to have said them at all, if they are pressed with a contradiction. We have an instance of it in this passage. The author seems to grant, that *single men may be called upon to retract their doctrines with advantage to the common faith;* though, indeed, he doth not say *by whom*, and it is very hard to guess: however, if it is really his opinion, after what he hath said of the rights of private judgment, that individuals may be censured for their doctrines by any public authority of society; his principle vanishes in a smoke of his own raising. To avoid this he hath

* P. 41, 42.

taken care to insert the condition, "*if they see reason*:" and therefore, if they *do not see reason*, they are still to proceed as they please, and the *common faith* must at last yield to *private opinion*.

Such is the forlorn, and defenceless state of that Church and its faith, which Christ left upon earth for the salvation of mankind! No protection can be received from the temporal sword against spiritual wickedness, without incurring the penalty of *perishing by the sword*: and as to the spiritual, which is the word of God, it cannot be used against any offender, till his own consent shall put it into the hands of his judges!

But if this consent is necessary now, I apprehend it was always necessary: and if so, the doctrine of the Apostles ought not to have been settled, and the *ministers of Satan* (as they are called) ought not to have been censured in virtue of any established rule, till all the Gentiles were come in, and their consent formally obtained: nor even then; for others might be born, who would in time object even to the condition of baptism in the name of the Trinity; and then it must have been given up to them: because no condition of communion is to be established, without the previous *consent of* ALL, *who without that condition would have a right to Christian communion*. Had there been no such *condition* imposed as *baptism*, Heathens would have had *a right to Christian communion*; therefore it follows, that this condition of *Baptism* could not be imposed without the *consent of Heathens!* What wild work would this doctrine produce, if it were admitted into civil society? It would require that nothing should be established as a condition of holding employments of trust, or enjoying any privileges under the government, without the *previous*

consent of all those who have no good will to the government; and would thrust themselves into office, only for an opportunity of overturning it as fast as possible, and introducing some other œconomy, more agreeable to their own temper and complexion.

Upon the whole, this author's plan is absolutely indefensible, if the Church is a *society*. Therefore he should have proved, that Christ and his Apostles did not plant any Church upon earth that could properly be called a society: for if it was a society, it would have the native rights of a society: and if it had them once, it must have them still; unless he is able to shew at what time, and by what means, they were forfeited. So the late learned Bishop *Coneybeare* argued, in what the author calls his *famous subscription sermon:* and, instead of confuting his position by tracing the Church up to its original, he asserts, that "every intelligent Christian," (that is, every Christian who is intelligent in his own conceit) "with the "Scriptures before him, is, upon Protestant prin-"ciples;" that is, upon *his* principle, "and in de-"crees of this nature, *a Church to himself**." And thus he goes about to prove it: "every Christian hath a right to search the Scriptures.—And if it is his duty to *search*, it must be also his duty" *(i. e.* his *right)* "to *determine* for himself; and if he finds just cause, to dissent from any, or all the establishments upon earth †." Whether he finds just cause, or not, he may determine for himself, and no man alive can hinder him. In the Convocation, General Council, or Communion of Saints, which he carries about with him, he may determine that white is black, and good is evil: but then we are to observe, that all this, by

* P. 23, 24, note. † Ibid.

the terms of the argument, is—*for himself:* whereas, the question is, whether the act of such a person, determining for himself in favour of heresy, sedition, or whatever else he pleases, will be so far binding to society, as to preclude the establishment of what is *agreeable to the word of God.*

His Church in a single person is a curiosity *sui generis*, and may pass with some people for a mere creature of the imagination. Most certainly it is not that Church spoken of by St. *Paul*, which is *not one member, but many*, and must be so of necessity; because there are many things to be done for a Christian, which a man cannot do for himself. But this Church in a single person must *baptize himself;* and if he wants to be a minister, he must *ordain himself*, or, as Bp. *Andrews* speaks, must *lay his own hands upon his own head;* then he must *prefer himself*, and *absolve himself*, and *marry himself*, and *bury himself*. However, it seems, this was once realized, as far as it well could be, upon a very ridiculous occasion. "There was a dispute at *Amsterdam* between *Ainsworth* and *Broughton*, whether the colour of *Aaron's* ephod were *blue*, or a *sea-water green;* which did not only trouble all the dyers in *Amsterdam*, but drew their several followers into sides and factions, and made good sport for all the world but themselves alone. By reason of which divisions and subdivisions, they fell at last into so many fractions, that ONE of them, in the end, became a CHURCH OF HIMSELF; and having none to join in opinion with him, baptized himself, and thereby got the name of a *Sebaptist*, which never any Sectary or Heretic had got before *." Such are the effects, when Confessions are abolished, and every

* Heylin's Hist. of the Presb. p. 375.

man proceeds according to his own private judgment, without prudence, charity, restraint, or direction. So would the *Churches* be *multiplied* amongst us!

Into this state of separation, it is the opinion of our Author, that every man must be thrown, who in virtue of his own Churchship shall determine upon the Scripture by the rule of his private judgment; for every such disquisitor will soon discover, that all Protestant Churches, without exception, are mistaken. "If the people," saith he, "were diligent and careful in searching the Scriptures, every one for himself, (as all Protestants agree they ought to do) the consequence would most probably be, that the far greater part of honest and sensible Christians should be excluded from the communion of every Church which has an established Confession *." From this passage it is obvious, that the Author (taking himself for one of these *honest* and *sensible* Christians) hath a quarrel against some one doctrine common to all the Confessions in the Christian world; and that he holds either few Christians, or none at all, to be *honest* and *sensible*, unless they judge of the Scripture with *his* prejudices. Now, to say nothing against the vanity and uncharitableness of this reflection, its disagreement with truth and fact is notorious; there being very many, at this day, who search the Scripture both diligently and carefully, without finding in themselves any disposition to *Arianism* or *Socinianism:* and others, who, by searching the Scripture, are reclaimed from these errors: of which I could give particular examples. The Author of the Confessional, however, could make short work with them all, by pronouncing such Christians to be neither *honest* nor *sensible*.

* P. 25.

It hath always been the custom of those who object to established Confessions of Faith, to pretend the authority of the Scripture: I say, to *pretend* it; for certainly it hath not been always at the bottom of their objections. This writer would have us believe, that the disagreement of honest and sensible Christians with the general doctrine of Protestants, is the *consequence* of their searching the Scripture. But appearances are very much against them; because their searching the Scripture hath been represented by themselves as *posterior* to this disagreement. Dr. *Clarke* hath laid it down, as the *first principle of Natural Religion*, that *God* is but *one Person* *. He discovered this principle, either with the Scripture, or without it. If with the Scripture, then it is absurd to call it the first principle of Natural Religion: If without the Scripture, then it was impossible he should receive the doctrine of the Orthodox, how plainly soever the Scripture may have revealed it. This principle being once laid down as the original suggestion of *Nature*, all posterior examinations of the Scripture can be nothing more than laboured accommodations of it to a contrary hypothesis already established in the mind of the examinant. Dr. *Clarke* had much learning, and was an acute reasoner: but while there are these and other flaws in his religious principles, the man who would silence us with his example and authority, is only exposing his own bigotry, and contradicting his favourite principle of *private judgment*; which appears, at last, to be no other than the judgment of Dr. *Samuel Clarke*, EXCLUSIVE of that of his readers. Our adversaries have written copious and florid recommendations of Scripture researches, to the

* See Clarke's Script. Doctr. p. 1. §. 1.

apparent renunciation of all human authority: but I have heard it observed, that if we could persuade men to study the Scripture, instead of the Religion of Nature, so *admired* by the *Deists* (as the Bishop of *Clogher* hath observed in his *Essay on Spirit* *) and which has *nothing but human authority* to support it; we should remove the foundations of more than half the *Arianism* of the present age.

We have now heard the Author's character of those Christians, who search the Scripture in such a fashion as disposes them to contradict established Confessions. As for the rest, he declares them in few words, to be either knaves or naturals. "The adherence of such numbers to the peculiar doctrines of the Church from which they receive their denomination, and even to some doctrines common to the Creeds and Confessions of all Churches which call themselves orthodox," (a circumlocution for the *doctrine of the Trinity*) "is owing to their ignorance, their indolence, their secularity, or the early prejudices of education†." As it is not in the power of all men to examine critically what they adhere to, it is happy for them when their rulers have no evil design upon their understandings. I speak here of those whose ignorance arises from a want of capacity or opportunity; which must be the case with very many. There is another generation in all communities, who are weak enough to take every thing upon trust, or too much engaged with pleasure and secularity to spend any of their time in searching for reasons of the hope that is in them. If it were the fashion to believe that *Socinus*

* P. 25. The principles of which Religion were so much admired by this same writer, that he undertook to confute the Trinity, by considering it in the *light of Nature and Reason*. See his *Title*.

† P. 25.

and *George Fox* the Quaker were true Apostles, ignorance and indolence would be content with the error; and supposing them to have a little dash of vanity, they would scoff, perhaps, at the Christians of better times for being led by the nose, and not having wisdom or spirit enough to believe as they do. But is truth to be disregarded and banished from society, because ignorant people do not know the grounds of it, or may be influenced by their betters to accept of error instead of it? Does it follow that a man's profession is false, because his conduct is unworthy of it? The Apostle tells us of some who *hold the truth in unrighteousness* *. Does he mean to reflect upon *the truth*, or upon those ungodly *persons* who hold it in an improper manner? Let ignorance, and indolence, and secularity then, each of them in their turns, or all of them together, approve the Orthodox Confession; this will be no reproach to the Confession itself, unless the same ignorance, and indolence, and secularity was at the bottom of its first establishment, to blind and corrupt the fathers of the Reformation: and let me add, that if *ignorance* and *secularity* must have a Confession, God forbid it should be of their own making; especially if they should happen to be possessed with the rage of proselyting: for *ignorance* will fabricate false doctrine, for want of proper materials; and *secularity* (using its own *private judgment)* will invent such a religion as shall flatter its own vices.

This leads us to the consideration of another plea of right, which, according to our Author, who is seldom so gracious as to make any allowances, is *perhaps the best the Church has to allege*. "A necessity

* Rom. i. 18.

for Confessions hath been inferred, from the indispositions and incapacities of the people to examine and judge for themselves *." And this is a plea, to which every compassionate Christian will be inclined to give as much weight as he can. The common people being, for the most part, unlearned, and incapable of searching the Scriptures for themselves, are liable to be deceived by those who pervert the Scriptures to the ruin of themselves and others: and therefore it is thought necessary that they should be instructed according to some known rule of sound doctrine; and their safety was a principal consideration with those who were entrusted with the compiling of the rules now established. But here again he is troubled with consequences, and is terribly afraid of doing good, lest some evil should come of it. The people must be left to take their chance, and the Church must not insist upon her *right*, or, more properly, her *duty*, of providing for their spiritual *necessities*; because this "argument would equally vindicate the Church of *Rome*, with respect to many of her impositions †." By the *impositions* of the Church of *Rome*, we understand those novel and false opinions which distinguish Papists from Protestants, and gave occasion to the Reformation; therefore, his consequence, in other words, will stand thus: "If we allow it to be the duty of the Church of *England* to instruct her people with sound doctrine, then it will be *equally* the duty of the Church of *Rome* to corrupt the people with false doctrine. If this Church establishes any Creed, the *Romish* Church may establish the Creed of Pope *Pius* V. both being *equally* necessary, from the indispositions and incapacities of the people." When he

* P. 26. † Ibid.

was about it, he might have inferred, with as much justice, that if one mother is bound to feed her children with bread, another will be under an *equal* obligation to give her children a dose of poison. And so much for the indispositions of the people.

He goes on to observe, that "these indispositions and incapacities in the Clergy would be but an awkward reason for making their subscription necessary *." They would certainly; and, therefore, I believe they were never given or thought of as a reason. The oaths are not administered to *teach* the duty of allegiance to those who take them, but in order to know whether they intend to perform what they understood before. So the Articles are not offered as a catechism to the Clergy to teach them a religion, which they are supposed already to have studied: but as a test of their religious opinions, that the Church may know whether the people will be safe under their teaching; that is, whether the sheep are committed to a *wolf*, or to a *shepherd*. These are the terms of the Scripture; and they express that peculiar sort of capacity or incapacity in the Clergy, of which the Articles are intended as a test. There may be a very great want of faith, hope, and charity, where there is no considerable defect in point of learning or natural capacity. A man may have his head filled with strange opinions, contrary to the sobriety of the Gospel, and his heart inflamed with a vehement desire of making disturbances in the Church, to the scandal of religion, and the breach of brotherly love and union among Christians. The intention of the Church, in appointing Confessions from the beginning, was to detect this spirit of error: and it was always thought

* P. 26.

necessary that it should be detected, if possible, and the evil effects of it prevented by timely caution. *I beseech you, brethren*, saith the Apostle, *mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to* THE DOCTRINE *which ye have learned* *. And upon another occasion he *commands* the Christians *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, which expression amounts to an abjuration, to *withdraw* themselves *from every brother who walketh disorderly, and not after the* TRADITION *received from us* †. For securing this *tradition* he prescribes the following method to the Clergy: *Charge some that they teach no other doctrine* ‡. We take our Confession to be such a *charge* as this, practically applied to all the teachers of the Church: and if the Author can instruct us how to apply it in such a manner as *better* to secure the *end* of it, which is *apostolical tradition*, or *the faith delivered to the saints*, every friend to true religion will give him thanks for his advice. In the mean time, we are well assured, that no one good purpose can ever be answered by withdrawing it.

But notwithstanding all that can be urged from the commands of the Scripture, or the necessities of the people, our cause is but a lost one at last; and for this reason, "Certain it is, in so far as the Laity are allowed not to be bound by these Church Confessions, the point of right to establish them is fairly given up §." But if the Laity are bound in common with the Clergy, then this right is not *fairly given up*. Let us consider whether they are or not. The Laity can be allowed to be *not* bound only *in so far* as they do *not subscribe* the Confession of the Church. But

* Rom. xvi. 17. † 2 Thess. iii 6, 7. ‡ 1 Tim. i. 3.
§ P. 28.

if they are not bound because they do *not* subscribe, then it will follow, that the Clergy are bound only because they *do* subscribe. And to what doth this subscription bind them? To the belief of the *true God*, the *Maker* and *Preserver* of all things; of the divine authority of the *Scripture;* of *eternal salvation by Jesus Christ;* of the benefit of the *sacraments;* the necessity of *good works*, &c. In a word, it binds them to a summary of their Christian faith. But if they had not *subscribed* it, they had been free from all obligation; that is, they need not have been Christians. Either this is true, or the Laity are bound to our Church Confessions, though they do not subscribe them. To keep the Clergy steady to their profession, some present obligations are added to spiritual considerations; but no man can imagine that the latter became void by the introduction of the former. The laws of every Christian state inflict temporal penalties on the breach of the eighth commandment: yet the eighth commandment is of force with them or without them; and there will be a reckoning on that account in the other world, if there is none in this. The same is true in all other cases, where the laws of God are farther secured by the human sanctions of emoluments on the one hand, or penalties on the other. But his reasoning implies, either that the former are made void by the latter, or, that no man is bound, unless he is bound by *both;* therefore, to argue with him a little in his own way, it is not clear that the Laity are free from all obligation, even by the present discipline of the establishment; subscription being required of those Laymen, whose conduct is supposed to have any particular influence upon religious society; as of graduates in the Universities, many of whom continue in lay profes-

sions as long as they live; and of all schoolmasters, of whom the majority, I believe, are Laymen. With the Articles of *Edward* VI. a *Catechism* was enjoined * by public authority, (probably without consulting the *private judgment* of the *children* who were to learn it) that the Laity might be brought up in the same principles as were subscribed by the Clergy. The Catechism, as it now stands in the Book of Common Prayer, is part of an *act of parliament*, and contains, in short, the substance of what is expressed more at large in the Articles. And moreover, if the obligation of the Laity is thought of while they are children, it is not forgotten or given up so long as they live. For let us ask, Why is the Clergyman bound to those particular doctrines expressed in the Articles? Because the contrary doctrines are not fit to be preached *to the laity*. Thus the public authority, which requires subscription, hath considered the Laity as the *end*, and the Clergy as the *means*; and, in so doing, could never intend that the Laity should be without obligation. Had this writer considered the case, before he undertook to pronounce upon it, he might have spared his sarcasm upon the Clergyman, as being *obliged to teach doctrines, which the Layman is not obliged to believe, or to practise*. The Laity are not indeed generally called upon to *subscribe*, nor are they generally required to swear allegiance to the government; yet they are no more allowed to be without obligation in the one case than the other. So long as the law of God is in force, they are bound *in foro conscientiæ*, without swearing or subscribing at all; and must answer it to the supreme law-giver, if

* Strype's Memorials, vol. ii. p. 420.

they disturb the State with treason, or the Church with false doctrine.

Our Author would have looked upon it as an instance of great disingenuity in some zealot of the Church, had he found such an one pleading against himself, on the supposition that the Laity are *not bound;* and then railing at him on a supposition that they *are bound;* and all this in the same page. Yet this is his own practice; and let the reader judge whether his words do not amount to a proof of it. "A law inducing men to profess, by a solemn act, that their RELIGIOUS OPINIONS are what they really are not, is no mark of charity in any Church *." This *law*, as the reader will find, if he turns back to the preceding page, is the *test-act;* the *men* he speaks of, are *Laymen;* the *religious opinions* they *profess by a solemn act*, are the opinions of the Church of *England;* these opinions are expressed in her Creeds and Articles: to these the Laity are bound *by a solemn act;* and thus he complains of an obligation, which he supposes, at the same time, not to exist! casting all the reproach upon the *Church.* But the Church does not make *acts of parliament;* they are made by the State, for its own security, in common with that of the Church. Papists, on pretence of religion, will overthrow a State which is *Protestant;* and *Calvinists* have once overthrown the State, for being *episcopal.* This law, he says, is no mark either of *wisdom* or *charity;* but *experience* will make every body *wise*, if it is not their own fault; and where self-preservation is thought necessary, *charity* begins at home.

His definition of this act is like those many other descriptions of men and things, with which they who

* P. 28.

will read his book may be better acquainted, if they desire it. The *test-act* is a law obliging men to profess that their religious opinions are *what they really are;* not what they *are not.* When an oath is prescribed by the law, it is not intended that men should *swear falsely,* or that they should prophane the Bible, by professing upon it a faith and hope which they *have not.* If they make this act a snare to themselves, their own infidelity, or want of conscience, is in fault, and not the wisdom or charity of the government under which they live. There is no law, how just or sacred soever, which ill men cannot find ways of affronting or eluding to their own condemnation; and his way of stating the laws would make them all equally ridiculous. For the *inducement* he speaks of is not in the law, but in the *advantage* which a wicked man hopes to get by *breaking* or *abusing* the law. If the *test-act* were changed into a law, requiring men to profess that they believe the Scripture to be the word of God, a bishopric, a deanry, or even an *archdeaconry,* might possibly *induce* an Infidel, who hath no religion at all, to make the usual profession. If this should appear, the Author might then argue for the repeal of it, as of a *scandalous* law, *inducing* men to profess that their religious opinions *are what they are not:* and a few such arguments, applied in their proper extent, would serve to unhinge all the law and order that is now in the world.

The *late Bishop of Winchester,* as he is pleased to inform us in the same page, has *so thoroughly discussed and cleared up* this subject of the test-act, *that there is no danger it should ever be thrown into confusion again.* The late Bishop of *Winchester* is an author whose principles and reasonings the writer of the Confessional hath copied very closely in many

respects; and if we are but so civil as to take him for an oracle, against all the remonstrances of *private judgment*, the consequences would be very favourable to himself, and save him a great deal of trouble. If any reader should be curious to know how this Bishop succeeded in *discussing and clearing up* every thing, I would advise him to read over Mr. *Law's* Third Letter to the Bishop of *Bangor*; and if he is a lover of truth, reason, Christianity, and a clear style, I can promise him much instruction, not without the mixture of a little diversion.

Some friends of the Church have defended the right of establishing Confessions upon the principles of *utility* and *expedience*; which bring us back again to the principle of *self-preservation*, with which we began. For if a lawless liberty to pervert the word of God is attended with any danger to religious society, a right to provide against it by lawful means may be inferred naturally enough. Our Author represents the matter thus: "But, say some men, if there be an expedience in Confessions of Faith, we may infer a right to establish them, though concerning such right the Scripture should be silent *." This plea he endeavours to confute, by blackening the Clergy, as a set of men upon whom this test of orthodoxy is not found to answer so well as might be wished; *many things being written and uttered, with all freedom, by different persons, equally irreconcileable to each other, as well as to the Orthodox Confession* †. Many such things are written in the *Confessional*, with as much *freedom*, and heat too, as we shall generally meet with; therefore, if the writer of that book is a subscribing member of the Church, I hope he will be

* P. 28. † P. 31.

pleased to take his own share of his own accusation. But he cannot seriously argue, that a regulation ceases to be expedient, only because men have the assurance to break through their own engagements. At this rate there ought to be no regulation at all; and his objection will conclude as strongly against the Bible as against the Articles. *Many things are written and uttered by different persons, equally irreconcileable to each other, as well as to the orthodox Confession;* and, by consequence, *equally irreconcileable to the orthodox Scripture itself,* unless it hath revealed to us contradictory propositions. Christians of different denominations, who have all received the same Scripture in common, are as irreconcileable in their treatment of the Scripture, as it is possible for the members of this establishment to be in the liberties they take with the orthodox Confession; and the scandal is as great upon one of these as the other. Yet he exclaims, as if our Confession was quite overset by this vain objection: "What now is the *utility* or *expedience* in this affair of subscription, which will atone for the scandal brought upon Christianity by this unscriptural article of Church discipline?" When the laws of any society are broken, a scandal is thereby brought upon its profession; but no society ever hit upon the expedient of removing that scandal by setting their laws aside. A while ago he represented the *test* as an *inducement* to break through the test: so here, instead of charging the *scandal* upon the transgressors of the law, whose proper business it is to find some *atonement* for it, he casts it upon the law itself. Our blessed Saviour saith, *Woe unto the* world *because of offences:* but by our Author's rule he ought to have said, *Woe unto the* Gospel *because of offences;* it being as equitable and proper to impute

all the *scandal* of worldly wickedness to the Gospel, which forbids it, as to father all the *scandal* of *heterodoxy* upon the *orthodox Confession.*

That this article of our discipline is *unscriptural,* doth not appear. We are not, indeed, commanded in so many words to subscribe the Articles of the Church of England: but the ministers of the Church having received the Christian faith, are commanded in the Scripture to *keep that which is committed* to their *trust* *; therefore, if our Confession comprehends that faith which the Apostles delivered to the Church, it ought to be *kept:* so far as it varies from that faith, it ought to be corrected; but to drop it in form would be to declare in fact, that its doctrines are not true; and, consequently, that the members of this Church (whatsoever might be advanced to the contrary in a preamble) are released from their obligation to the word of God, out of which those doctrines are extracted; which would be a very unscriptural proceeding, and have consequences fatal to Christianity, though it may appear very promising to this gentleman, and the whole Socinian fraternity. The present method of preserving our faith by a subscription, is no more contrary to any precept of the Scripture, than the repeating of an *amen* at the end of the Creed, or the Lord's Prayer. This act may indeed be rendered even sinful by the sinfulness of the matter subscribed; but if the matter subscribed is scriptural, the subscription by which we assent to it will be so too; unless it is wrong for a man to declare that assent with his *pen,* which it is his duty to declare with his *lips.* This part of his objection then will be something or nothing, as the doctrine of our Confession shall appear to be true or false.

* 1 Tim. vi. 20.

Our Author's next attempt is to render all Confessions of faith impracticable and ridiculous, by setting the rights and proceedings of Protestant Churches against one another: and thus he argues; "Let us suppose that Protestant Churches have such a right, each within its own confines; the question is, how shall one Church exercise this right, without encroaching on the right of another*?" Here he lays down a supposition, and departs from it immediately, without having patience to make a single period consistent. His supposition and question, if compared together, will make just as good sense as if I should say, "Let us suppose that every master of a family hath a right to walk about his own house; the question is, how he shall do this, without breaking into the house of his next neighbour?" He begins with supposing their rights to be separate, and circumscribed by *their own confines;* then raises a question, which is no question at all, unless their rights extend *beyond their confines.* There is the same perplexity in what follows: "All particular Churches are coordinate; they have all the same right in an equal degree." This, we must observe, according to the state of his argument, is *within their own confines;* and, in the next paragraph, he grants, as explicitly as need be, that *their powers are limited by their situation, and extend not beyond their own departments.* Yet he raises difficulties, as before, by supposing their rights to interfere with one another; and declares, he "does not see how it is possible for any Church to exercise this right, where she establishes doctrines inconsistent with those of other Churches, without abridging those Churches of their right to establish their own

* P. 33.

doctrines." If these latter doctrines are *false* doctrines, their right to establish them is already *abridged* upon other principles: if they are true, co-ordinate powers can be under no common obligations to one another, but by common consent; otherwise they are not co-ordinate.

He hath here confounded two cases, which ought to have been carefully distinguished; and in this confusion lies the whole merit of his argument. For Protestant Churches may either act separately for themselves, within their own confines, as he pretended at first to suppose; or they may act for the whole body of Protestants at large. If they act in this latter capacity, they cannot act authoritatively, unless they act jointly, or, as he expresses it, without the *unanimous consent of all the rest:* but the Author must have known that this was not the case he had before him. Did the Church of *England* ever pretend that preachers in *France* or *Denmark* are bound to qualify themselves by subscribing the English Confession, and confining themselves to the use of the English Liturgy? The contrary is expressly declared in the Preface to the book of Common Prayer —"In these our doings we condemn no other nations, nor prescribe any thing but to our own people only." Such an extent of power is indeed assumed by the Church of *Rome;* but it is an absurd usurpation, and was never claimed by any community of Protestants; who well know that they cannot act for other Churches, but so far only as they can assist in a general council.

One national Church, then, cannot act for another, upon this very principle, that they are co-ordinate: but it cannot hence be inferred that national Churches have no power to act separately for themselves. The

kingdoms of *Europe* are co-ordinate kingdoms, and, as such, cannot act for the whole, unless they act in confederacy. If it should follow, as in the logic of *the Confessional*, that they cannot, upon this principle, act for their own security at home, then it would appear, as perhaps the Author intended it should, that co-ordinate power is *no power*, and that there ought to be no such thing as authority upon earth, either civil or ecclesiastical.

To prepare his readers for this loose way of thinking, he observes, that "no Church can have a right to establish any doctrines, but upon a supposition that they are true. If the doctrines established in one Church are true, the contrary doctrines established in another Church must be false; and no Church will contend for a *right* to establish *false* doctrines *." He hath a strange art of throwing a cause up into the air, and contriving the matter so that it always falls upon its back; whereas a fairer writer would sometimes suffer it to light upon its legs. He might have said, with as much truth, and much more ingenuity, that *if the doctrines established in one Church are* false, *the contrary doctrines established in another Church will be* true; *and* every Church *has* a right *to establish* true *doctrines*. It is judiciously observed, by the learned and respectable writer of the *Three Letters* †, that this objection strikes as deeply at the rights of private judgment in individuals, as at the authority of separate Churches: for if the doctrines believed by one person are true, the contrary doctrines believed by another will be false; and no person will contend for a right to believe false doctrines; consequently, no person can have a right to believe any doctrines,

* P. 34. † See Letter II. p. 72.

but with the unanimous consent of every other person: besides, to use another of his arguments, how can any one person, more than any one Church, use his own private judgment, without *encroaching on the right* of another's private judgment? If these reasonings are thus carried to their natural issue, private rights as well as public will fall before them, and religious persuasion can no more be supported in individuals than in societies. Men may be mistaken, and societies may be mistaken; but the rights of one society are no more affected by the mistakes of a foreign society, than the rights of private judgment in any one man at *London* is affected by the groundless determinations of another at *York*. If any one foreign society may be admitted as a check upon establishments here in England, why not another? Papists are of the human species; not only invested with the common rights of reason and private judgment, and as such upon a level with those at *Geneva*, but they also produce texts of Scripture, in their *own sense*, for all their innovations. As they admit doctrines contrary to our doctrines, and both cannot be true, we ought to establish nothing, lest, in contradiction to the Pope, we should establish *false doctrine*.

It was asserted above, that *all particular Churches are co-ordinate: they have all the same right in the same degree*. If these particular Churches are national Churches, subsisting under the laws of independent countries, the assertion is true; but it is extended to an extravagant latitude in *the Confessional*, and comprehends under the name of *Churches* all the different *parties* or denominations of sectaries in *the same Protestant state* *. I beg leave to spend some time upon

* P. 34.

this position, because it is of great consequence, and will shew the depth of this writer's ecclesiastical polity.

Let us ask then, in the first place, whence this *co-ordination of Churches in the same Protestant state* is derived? Not from the form and doctrine of the apostolical Church in the primitive ages, nor yet from the principles or practices of this Church at the Reformation. To derive it from the former of these, is to suggest that Christianity made its public entry into the kingdoms of the world under the different forms of the *Anabaptists*, the *Calvinists*, the *Quakers*, the *Independents*, the *Racovians*, &c. &c. That all these forms were thrown down before the magistrate, for him to pick up which he liked best, and that there was nothing but fancy to direct him in his choice. Had this been a fact, the co-ordination here spoken of had been of some authority, and Christianity itself would have done what its persecutors could never accomplish: for nothing but everlasting opposition and confusion could have arisen from the co-equality of such an heterogeneous institution. But in reality the faith and polity of the Christian church, for the two or three first centuries, had but one face all over the world; therefore, a supposed co-ordination in favour of all sects, can find no precedent in this state of the Church.

Neither can it be deduced from our Reformation of Popery: for the episcopal Church of England was a Church of Christ before the Reformation, though a corrupt one; as a man is still a man, though he is blind and scorbutic. The co-ordinate principle, therefore, must suppose, with the Papists, that the Church of England was then annihilated, and that some new thing started up in the place of it, of the same date

and authority with all the other novel forms we have amongst us. Our adversaries of the Church of Rome have laboured hard to prove that this Church is, in this respect, but upon a footing with one of her own sectaries, that they may bring a scandal upon the episcopal Reformation. But it does not follow that this Church had been dead and buried, because it was reformed. A man may be cured of a leprosy without being first killed. Our Author, however, grants as much as the Papists will require. This co-ordination, he observes, must be admitted *upon the genuine grounds of separation from the Church of Rome* *. But these genuine grounds are no more than the imaginary grounds which he hath substituted instead of the true ones: for here again I must remind the reader, that the Papists have never failed to charge all the wild extravagances of some hot-headed Protestants upon the *genuine principles* of the *Reformation*. They call it, as this writer doth, a *separation;* and instruct their people, that all other separations, indeed all the confusion that can be set on foot with pretence of religion, may be justified upon the same grounds. But in answer both to the Papists, and this gentleman, it must be remembered, that there was a time when they who called themselves Roman Catholics, came in great numbers to our churches, and had no objection to conformity with us as a true Church, till the Pope terrified them with an interdict, and excommunicated Queen *Elizabeth* †. But what is more to the purpose, our Reformation can never be improved into a *separation*, analogous to that of the sectaries, but by allowing the supremacy of the Pope over the

* P. 33.

† See Strype's Annals, or Collier's Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 436.

English Bishops to have been legal. Grant the validity of that supremacy, and then our Reformation was a separation, that is, a schism; because it was a revolt from lawful authority. No man will say, that in case the Church of Rome had reformed its own errors without consulting the Archbishop of *Canterbury*, it would have been guilty of a separation. No more were we guilty of a separation in reforming our errors, without staying for the Pope's consent: for his supremacy being an usurpation, that is, a nullity, it can make no real difference between these two cases.

We are now to consider how this *co-ordinate principle* affects the establishment. It *manifestly requires*, as the Author proceeds to assure us, that the same *liberty* (of being *established by public authority*) should be allowed to all claimants; whereas it is in fact *allowed* to *no more than one Church in the same Protestant state. In every state some* one party *has succeeded*, &c *. There needs little more to shew the absurdity of this new *co-ordinate principle*, than that it requires impossibilities: for the *congregational* form is inconsistent with that of the *Quakers;* both are inconsistent with the *Presbyterian;* and all with the *episcopal Church.* To establish all, would be to confound all; and the very attempt would make public authority and public religion ridiculous. All that can be done is to establish one, and tolerate the rest; and this is done already. The Church assents to the toleration of the other forms, though none of them would assent to the toleration of the Church; and it would indeed be as unnatural to expect it, as that the less should comprehend the greater, or that kingly

* P. 34.

government should be endured under a republican usurpation. Every state will naturally establish that religion which itself professes; nor can any other have the establishment, till something superior to the state is introduced; that is, till the state is changed, and the government overturned. The state may have prejudices, and establish a spurious form of religion; therefore, we never plead the establishment as an argument of the truth of our profession.

The Church of England being no favourite, in any respect, with this writer, he hath indulged his contempt for that society, by throwing it into the lump amongst other professions, under the common title of a *party;* and he hath some reason: for then it may be asked, Why not one party as well as another? Thus he sets up the right of all, that no right may be found in any; and pleads for all, that he may overturn all, and leave nothing established in their room: for co-ordinate right is co-ordinate confusion; it is *imperium in imperio,* which hath always been reckoned an absurdity, if the powers claimed are the *same in kind.* If I have a right over any man, and he hath also a right over me, and our principles are at the same time irreconcileable; nothing can be settled to the world's end. Therefore, a right was originally lodged somewhere, or *Jesus Christ* must be supposed to have planted no Church upon earth. There was certainly a right, when St. *Paul* said, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow." And again, in the same chapter,—"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves *." And if there was an original right with the Church and its rulers,

* Heb. xiii. 7. 17.

it is the duty of Christians to consider whether that right is now remaining, and where it is to be found; or, if it is not found, it ought to be shewn very clearly when and how it came to be lost. At present, however, the terms of our subject lead us to enquire when the Church of England sunk into the character of a co-ordinate *party*, such as this Author now finds it. Was it a party at the Reformation, that is, *a faction under itself?* Or did the act of Reformation, as the Papists object, transmute it into a party? If not this, was it rendered such afterwards, by the successful usurpation of a domestic faction? Then may good coin be rendered counterfeit, only by being trodden under foot, and Christianity itself confuted by persecution. Then was the restoration of the episcopal form, which had prevailed from the days of the Apostles, the restoration of a party; and the restoration of the state, which rose and fell with the Church, being of the same religion, must likewise have been the restoration of a party. This discovery opens a very large field, which, if properly cultivated, will furnish us with an entire new system of ideas. A considerable branch of this system is brought out to view at p. 316 of our Author's performance; where we are taught, by some examples of modern date, that if men write and act against the fundamental doctrines of religion, the *faction* which ensues is not chargeable upon those men, but upon the authority which calls them to account for it, and upon all those who presume to act under the protection of the laws for the support of our common faith. Thus when *Whiston* wrote against the Trinity, the *faction* was raised by the University of *Cambridge*, which expelled him. When Dr. *Clarke* made a like effort, the *faction* was in the orthodox. When Dr. *Clayton* made

his bloody speech* against *Athanasius*, the *faction* was in the Irish House of Lords. And, by the same rule, when the Author of the Confessional, and his friends, shout against the Church and its doctrines, and rail at the present bench of bishops in the public newspapers, doing what they are able to stir up all the spiritual malecontents of the kingdom against the *Creeds*, the *faction* is not with them, but with the Author of the *Three Letters*, and all others who presume to deliver their opinion of the *Confessional* with much less freedom than that writer hath treated the faith and discipline of the Church. A *faction* used to signify a combination of bad men against lawful authority; but in the present system it means just the reverse.

To conclude this chapter, and connect it with what follows, I shall here insert the words of *Calvin*, who, with all his aversion to Popery and unscriptural impositions, hath confirmed, with much strength of reason, and in a very small compass, that claim which this writer hath taken so much pains to perplex and overthrow. "Nos consulitis, an adigendi sint ad fidem suam publice testandam, qui se in ecclesiam admitti postulant.—Non videmus cur grave sit homini, qui inter ecclesiæ domesticos censeri vult, *Christo* capiti in solidum nomen dare; quod *fieri non potest, nisi diserte subscribat sinceræ pietati, et ingenue errores damnet, quibus sinceritas religionis corrumpitur. Jam errorum detestatio sæpe ex circumstantiâ temporum pendet; quia prout novas turbandi rationes excogitat Satan, prudenter occurrere necesse est.* Scimus quan-

* I call it such, because the speaker told his audience, that Athanasius *waded to his episcopal chair through an ocean of blood.* If the reader will consult Dr. Cave's Life of Athanasius, he may learn *who shed it.*

topere nobis commendet *Paulus* unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis. Porro ad fovendum et retinendum inter pios consensum, *plus quam necessaria est* illa solennis fidei professio; denique quicunque optabunt ecclesiam Dei stare incolumem, non ægre ferent hoc adminiculo eam fulciri. Non putamus esse qui litem moveant de generali illa professione: sed frigeret illa, nisi *distinctè quisque tam hæreticis quam perversis dogmatibus renunciet.*" Forbes Op. fol. vol. i. p. 498.

CHAPTER III.

REMARKS ON CERTAIN PRETENDED PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION.

THE *Reformation*, a subject very much misrepresented by interested writers, having frequently been brought upon the stage, and reformation being the object of the *Confessional*, I will go back again, and make some observations on the *principles* which our Author hath very injuriously, and without referring to any single authority, fathered upon the first reformers. I shall, therefore, endeavour to shew, these are neither the principles of the *Reformation*, nor of the *Scripture*; but that they are more probably borrowed from some modern *improvers of the Reformation*, of a very different temper and persuasion from the first reformers of Popery. These *principles* are delivered by the Author, at the opening of his work: "When the Protestants first withdrew from the communion of the Church of *Rome*, the principles they went upon were such as these: *Jesus Christ hath by*

his Gospel called all men unto liberty, the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and restored them to the privilege of working out their own salvation by their own understandings and endeavours *." For this doctrine, as I observed above, we are referred only to the whole body of Protestants in the gross; no particular writers of that class being cited upon the occasion. We are, therefore, to take it as the doctrine which this Author hath adopted, and to consider how far it is agreeable to truth.

That *Jesus Christ* hath called all men to *liberty*, will readily be allowed as an express declaration of his Gospel. In what sense the Scripture itself understands this liberty, we shall see presently. In the mean time, it is certainly true that *Jesus Christ* did likewise call all men to obedience and subjection for conscience sake; and was himself the greatest example of it in all the occurrences of his life; from his birth, which happened while his parents were attending a summons from the *Roman* Emperor, to his condemnation by *Pontius Pilate*. He absolved no man from his duty to the powers that were set over him; but commanded his hearers to submit to the authority even of corrupt *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, because they *sat in Moses's seat* †; only with this reserve, that they should not do after their works, because these were very far short of the perfection and purity prescribed by their teaching. It is equally true, that the present governors of this Church sit in the *seat of the Apostles*, though they are none of them invested with miraculous powers: for the Scribes and Pharisees wrought no miracles; yet their authority devolved to them from *Moses*, who wrought many. They were

* Conf. p. 1. † Matth. xxiii. 2.

also as distant from *Moses* in point of time, as the present Church is from the age of the Apostles; and, I hope, as unlike to *Moses* in their practical endowments, as the Bishops of this Church are unlike to the Apostles, even in the estimation of the Author of the *Confessional.*

Now it would be wrong to suppose that *Christ* was more solicitous concerning the peace, order, and discipline of the Jewish Church, than concerning the government of the Christian: for the sake of which he invested his disciples with the same authority as was committed to himself—*As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you,* &c. *; and he left them with this promise—*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world* †; not with these individual persons to whom he then spake, but with those who should succeed to their ministration in the Church: for *you,* and your posterity or successors, mean the same thing in the language of the Scripture. Thus *Jacob* says to *Joseph:* "God shall be *with you,* and bring *you* again unto the land of your fathers ‡;" that is, with their children, who were brought out of *Egypt* four hundred years afterwards. St. *Paul* hath a remarkable passage to the same effect in his first Epistle to *Timothy*—"I charge thee in the sight of God, and before Jesus Christ, that thou keep this commandment without spot, and unrebukable, *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Upon which text we have the following remark in Bishop *Overall's* Convocation Book, p. 180. "It was impossible for Timothy to observe these things *till the coming of Christ,* he being to die long before; therefore, the precepts and rules which St. *Paul* had given unto him

* John xx. 21. † Matth. xxviii. 20. ‡ Gen. xlviii. 21.

to observe in his episcopal government, did equally appertain, as well to Bishops, his successors, as to himself; and were to be executed by them *successively after his death unto the world's end.*"

There is no necessary connection betwixt the miraculous powers of the Apostles, and their ecclesiastical commission as rulers in the Church: for they wrought miracles with a view to those only who did *not believe* *: but their authority, as ministers of the Church, was committed to them for the sake of those only who were within the Church: and the occasions of the people render the like ministerial authority as necessary now as it was then.

The late Bishop *Coneybeare* is reflected upon, for arguing from the *consent* required by the Apostles to their doctrines, to the consent required by succeeding Church-governors to *human* articles †, in what the Author calls his *famous subscription sermon*. It doth not appear that he hath done this, unless his *text* is taken for an argument of his sermon; yet he might have done it very safely, the argument being allowable when properly expressed: otherwise it cannot be true that Christ, according to his promise, is with his Apostles (that is, their successors) to the end of the world. If we may have the liberty of expressing the argument in our own terms, rather than those which the Author puts into our mouths, it will stand thus—The Apostles required a consent to *their doctrines;* therefore, their successors may require a consent to the *same doctrines*. The argument hath now a very different face; and it will not be easy to answer it; because it will be requisite to point out and demonstrate, that there is a disagreement between

* 1 Cor. xiv. 22. † P. 23. Note B.

our present doctrines and those of the Apostles delivered to us in the Scripture; of which labour the Author is remarkably sparing throughout his whole performance; quoting the Scripture but seldom, and then chiefly in a sense of accommodation, as it furnishes him with phrases to express his own jests and sarcasms.

Let us now examine to what species of liberty Christ hath called men by his Gospel. And here, to guard against some false ideas of liberty, we may venture to affirm, that Christ never called any man to a liberty of *rejecting his own laws*, and *denying his own doctrines;* and that there can be no such thing amongst Christians, as a *liberty against God.* I should have thought it superfluous to say this, had I not lately seen it maintained, in express terms, by an advocate for *reformation*, and the advancement of *primitive Christianity*, that "no man ought to pay any submission to that *doctrine* and *discipline* which he DOES NOT LIKE *." All the liberty of which I can find any account in the Scripture, is a deliverance from the bondage of *sin* †; and a glorious liberty it is: but then it is such as leaves a man the *servant of righteousness.* There is another sort of liberty, which sets us free from the burthensome yoke of the services and ceremonies of the Mosaic law ‡; and there is likewise a liberty, which the servants of Jesus Christ may plead upon just occasions, and which was accordingly pleaded by many at the Reformation: I mean, that of *obeying God rather than man*, where the commands of the latter are inconsistent with

* Independent Whig, vol. ii. p. 45. † Rom. vi. 18, 22.
‡ Gal. v. 1, 2, 3.

those of the former. Yet this is more properly a state of subjection to the laws of God, attended with the privilege of *suffering shame for his name* *, than a state of freedom from human authority: and indeed the Gospel-state, in whatever light we shall view it, provided we do not pervert and transform it into something else, will prove at last to be a state of *obedience*. The first reformers, that they might preserve their obedience to the divine laws, retained the substance of religion as it was before; removing only the sinful impositions and modern superstitions which had been introduced without any warrant of Scripture, or precedent of the purest ages; and the most zealous and forward amongst them never extended Christian liberty to matters of *faith*, but confined it to things in their nature *indifferent* †. We meet with none of these distinctions in *the Confessional*, though they were religiously attended to by the more learned and sober sort of Protestants, who did not then set up a new system, but corrected the new, as nearly as they were able, by the old: which is the duty of our Author to do, if he is infected with any unscriptural novelties. And when he recommends liberty, he ought to make some proper reservations in favour of *obedience*: for there is a wild and dangerous species of liberty, which sometimes takes upon it the name of *conscience*, and in this disguise treads under foot the laws of God, and would soon abolish the very name of Christianity, if it were left to its own ways.

* See Acts iv. 19. and v. 41.

† Hæc *indifferentia* sunt, et in *Ecclesiæ libertate* posita, *Calvin.* Instit. lib. iv. c. 17. §. 43. and Mr. *Cruden*, in his *Concordance*, (a book of more authority than some hundreds of Commentaries) defines the liberty of the New Testament as *a power or freedom in using things indifferent*: referring to the texts of 1 Cor. viii. 9, 10. 29.

But let us proceed with the supposed principles of the Reformation.

"For the work of salvation sufficient means are afforded in the Holy Scriptures, without having recourse to the doctrines and commandments of men."

The sense which I presume the Author to have intended in this place, is very loosely expressed. For *means*, as the word is generally applied by divines, signify the *means of grace*, or sacraments of the Church; which are indeed prescribed by the Holy Scriptures, but cannot possibly be administered by them. Whence it comes to pass, that every Christian is thrown into a state of dependence upon other Christians by the very conditions of his religion, and cannot subsist as such but *in society*. And as the sacraments cannot be administered without some form, which form is not set down for us in so many words by the New Testament; necessity requires that it should be settled by the governors of the Church, after the pattern of the best times.

However, let us take these for the *means* of *knowledge*, and *instruction* in Christian learning. Neither will this sense agree with the principles of the first Protestants; if we may judge by their *practice*, which is the surest rule. For the *Augustan Confession* plainly discovers in the matter of it, that the compilers had a particular regard to the faith of the primitive Church; which the Author understands, by the *doctrines and commandments of men;* and is an enemy to all Confessions, chiefly on account of their conformity with the doctrines of the first Christians. In the conference at *Worms*, anno 1557, *de normâ judicii ecclesiæ*, the Protestants assumed, as the rule of their judgment, *prophetica et apostolica scripta, et* SYMBOLA, *&c.* not the Scripture alone, but the Scrip-

ture interpreted according to the faith of the primitive Creeds *.

Mr. *Chillingworth,* than whom no man ever argued with more earnestness for the Bible as the only religion of Protestants, doth nevertheless allow to the Church, " an authority of determining controversies of faith, according to plain and evident Scripture, *and universal tradition ;*" and that the Church is *infallible,* so long as it proceeds according to this rule. He affirms, that this tradition was valuable so long as the primitive Churches preserved their unity in matters of faith: which is the ground of that passage in *Tertullian—Variasse debuerat error Ecclesiarum; quod autem apud multos unum est, non est erratum, sed traditum* †. Here the way of Papists and Protestants divides: for they deduce their traditions down to the modern ages of the Church. We only say, what is certainly both true and reasonable, that the tradition *Tertullian* speaks of, is as good now as it was then.

All Protestants ever were, and now are, bound by their profession to grant, that the Gospel hath delivered us from the *doctrines and commandments of men,* properly so called, as certainly as from the vain traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees; but it hath not absolved us from the prudence and caution, and indeed the common-sense, which requires every believer to pay a proper regard to a general consent amongst the first and best Christians; nor did the Protestants think so; as this Author, forgetting himself a little, hath taken care to inform us in the next paragraph but one; where he complains, that the *Reformers* determined the one sense of Scripture to be

* Matthiæ Theatr. Historic. p. 1072.

† Tertull. Prescr. contr. Hæret. See Chillingworth, chap. ii. §. 147. §. 182.

the sense of the primitive Church, that is, the sense of the orthodox fathers, for a certain number of centuries. From these they took their interpretations of Scripture, and upon these they formed their rule of faith and doctrine, and so reduced their respective Churches within the bounds of a theological system. Did they so? and who were the Reformers then that set up private judgment and the Scripture, independent of the faith of the primitive Church? The truth of the matter is, this principle of the Reformation is such as the Author *finds;* the other is such as he thought proper to *make,* that there might be some foundation for his new superstructure.

He proceeds to instruct us, that *faith and conscience are not to be compelled by man's authority.* Whatever authority the Christian society may be invested with, no Protestants were so absurd as to think that it could *force* any man to *believe,* and be *baptized,* and be *saved:* for the Christian life is a work of choice, and a reasonable service, not to be extorted by any authority, even of God himself; so that men must be gained over to the truth by sufficient evidence; yet not without the grace of God disposing the heart to understand and admit of it. The Church administers this evidence in behalf of its own injunctions: but be the evidence ever so just and cogent, it always will and must be in the power of men to reject it; as many did the preaching of the Apostles, and even of Christ himself: and they would again do the same at this day, were Christ and his Apostles to preach the doctrine of the Church of *England* in person, as they still do by their writings.

When it is objected (in the next words) as a principle of the Reformation, that *the Church of Rome hath none other than human authority for the spiritual do-*

minion she claimeth, the assertion is too general to be true; and the Papists will rather despise the Protestants who advance it, than be at the pains to answer them: for the Church of *Rome*, in common with the Churches of *France*, *England*, and *Abyssinia*, is so far invested with spiritual authority, as to have the commission of *Christ* for baptizing, confirming, ordaining preachers, and administering the Communion *in both kinds*, if she would be so just to herself as to make use of it. For those inventions of later times, which distinguish her from the primitive Church, she hath indeed none other than *human authority*. If every kind and degree of spiritual dominion is denied to the Church, then these distinctions will be of no value; and therefore the Author points his reflections either against the reformed Church of *England*, or the idolatrous Church of *Rome*, as his occasions make it convenient. But the first Reformers, a few fractious and unreasonable men excepted, were always inclined to do this Church more justice.

The last article is as follows: "The Church of *Christ* is *congregated* by the *word of God*." This principle hath neither truth nor sense: for the Scripture can no more congregate a Church, than it can administer Baptism and the Lord's Supper: and it is a notorious fact, that the Church was congregated by *Christ* and his Apostles before the Scriptures of the New Testament were written. Our blessed Lord ordained his twelve Apostles, and his seventy disciples, by his own personal act; and appointed the two sacraments of the Church while he was present with it. The Apostles appointed the order of deacons soon after the ascension; and the Church is now congregated by *descent* or *succession* from that Church, which

was originally congregated by Christ and his Apostles. *Paul* received his commission from Heaven immediately: he *laid his hands* upon *Timothy*, investing him at the same time with an authority to lay his hands * upon others; and so on to the end of the world. The same rule had obtained before in the *Jewish* Church, which was congregated by descent from the family of *Aaron*, and the tribe of *Levi;* and so it was understood by Christ himself, who allowed the Scribes and Pharisees to sit in the *seat of Moses*, though *Moses* had been dead two thousand years before. There is no other possible way of deriving any authority from God, now he hath ceased to act personally in the Church, without being exposed to all the excesses of imposture and licentiousness. If the Church were congregated, as this writer imagines, in opposition to reason and fact, any enthusiast, with the Bible in his hand, might form a society, extract a new set of doctrines, contrary in every respect to the old, appoint new sacraments, plead *co-ordinate rights*, and supersede the present Church upon Protestant principles; that is, upon such principles as this gentleman, and the Papists, have falsely imputed to the whole body of Protestants.

There are two other principles, which the Reformers are allowed on all sides to have maintained very expressly; but these are exhibited in the new system only to be condemned. The Author tells us, they "*unhappily adopted* certain maxims as self-evident; namely, that *there could be no edification in religious society without uniformity of opinion;* and that *the true sense of Scripture could be but one* †." The design

* 2 Tim. i. 6. 1 Tim. v. 22. † Conf. p. 3.

of the *Confessional* is so intimately affected by these two principles, that it was necessary they should appear under some disadvantage. But if the former of them is strictly enforced by the Gospel, and the latter evident to reason and common sense, the *unhappiness* with which they were adopted is rather to the Author himself than to the first Reformers. It is a determined point with St. *Paul*, that the Christian society is *edified* by *love* or *charity* *, which is the *end of the commandment* †, or consummation of Christian virtue: and this writer's performance would yield us too pregnant a proof, though there were few others, that men do not *love* those Christians from whom they *differ in opinion*. Nothing indeed is so subversive of the pacific intention of the Gospel, as strife, wrangling, contention, envy, hatred, and malice; all of which, by unhappy experience, seem to arise more naturally from mistakes and differences in religion, than from any other causes whatsoever: and it may have a foundation in reason, that the division will be greatest of all, when men are divided by that which ought to unite them the most.——Happy, therefore, would it be for the world, if we could but once see men reconciled to that one religion (it cannot be more than one) which hath been delivered to them by *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles! For as there is no enmity so restless and dangerous, as that which is generated by religious differences, so there is no friendship upon earth so strong and extensive, as that which arises from religious agreement. So long as there is variety of opinion in the Church, there will be wrangling and animosity; and under this state our Master hath informed us, that his disciples are scarcely to be dis-

* Eph. iv. 16. † 1 Tim. i. 5.

tinguished from unbelievers, and men of this world *. Nor is it necessary that the matter in agitation should be some of the higher doctrines of faith; for the smallest spark will be sufficient to kindle a flame, which, howsoever low it may begin, will soon extend itself to the higher parts of the edifice. What altercations and heart-burnings have we seen in this country! and how have some *consciences* been galled and overburthened with the weight of this question: Whether it is as lawful for a minister of *Christ* to appear in a garment of *flax* as in one of *sheep's wool*? A difference no more worthy of putting Christian love to the trial, than that of some Jewish rabbies, whose consciences (while they were swallowing a camel) could never be well satisfied concerning the precise number of *white hairs* which ought to determine a beast not to be a *red heifer*.

So great was the diversity of opinion amongst some of the first Protestants, that it exposed them heartily to the obloquy and contempt of the Church of *Rome*. It broke them into sects; some of which, as the Author describes them in strong terms, were *scandals to all religion*, and *nuisances to all civil society*. Their opinions as Protestants being neither restrained nor condemned by any general form of Christian doctrine, the Papists had a favourable opportunity of calumniating the whole body *as the maintainers of every heresy, abettors of every sedition, which* Europe *had heard of or seen in that generation* †. Such was the condition of the Protestants, by his own account, before they were reduced to an uniformity of opinion by the orderly establishment of some common system of faith. The Reformers, therefore, having their eyes

* John xiii. 35. † Conf. p. 4.

open to the plainest maxim of the Scripture, and seeing it thus confirmed by the experience of their own time, would have been without excuse, had they been so vain as to expect any *edification in religious society without uniformity of opinion.* In this, however, our Author cannot follow them: for why? the Bishop of *Clogher*, in his *Essay on Spirit*, was of another mind; and his authority is introduced in the following manner: "I apprehend, says Dr. *Clayton*, any attempt towards avoiding diversity of opinion, not only to be an useless but impracticable scheme. In which I entirely agree with him*;" and so do many others, with whom this Author, perhaps, would think it hard to be associated. However, I am willing to own, that the *first* of these *unhappily-adopted* maxims is not of so much importance to religious society, if the Author can make good his censure against the *second.* For if the *true sense* of Scripture can be *more than one*, men may differ in their religion, without departing from the *truth;* and in such a case, but little danger is to be apprehended; unless this difference should be blended with a spirit of pride and opposition, which delights in mischief. But how far this is possible, he hath not attempted to shew us; either by reason, or any pertinent examples from the Scripture itself.

Different senses may be either *collateral* or *contradictory.* By collateral senses, I mean such as agree in effect, though they differ in terms; or such as do not contradict any express proposition of the Scrip-

* P. 201. In another of his publications, he is so far from regarding the love of uniformity as a Christian virtue, that he scoffs at it in the worthy writer of the *Three Letters*, as "a brain-sick anxiety for the safety and preservation of *ecclesiastical peace!*" Occas. Rem. part i. p. 57.

ture. Of these there may be different sorts, and all of them inoffensive, at least not attended with immediate danger, provided the passage be obscure, or the matter indifferent *. But of *contradictory* senses, it is impossible that *more than one* can be the *true sense;* such, for example, as are given by the Author's friends on one side, and by the Church of *England*, in conjunction with the primitive Church, on the other. It would carry me far beyond my present design, if I should descend to particulars; which the case doth not require, especially as Dr. *Clarke* hath saved me the trouble, by an attempt to reconcile the language of our liturgical forms to the *sense* of *Arianism;* of which his readers could easily see the impropriety; and he disserved the cause by it very much; for which he is blamed in the sixth chapter of the *Confessional*, by the same person, who, in the course of the same performance, declares it to be his own private opinion, in opposition to the Reformers, that the Scripture (written with at least as great precision as any human forms) may have more *true senses* than *one!* The liberty of *private interpretation*, for which he hath pleaded, must drive him either upon this absurdity, or another equal to it. For if the *true sense* can be but *one*, and he hath insisted on a right in every individual to put his *own sense;* supposing withal, after the *Essay on Spirit*, that *no two thinking men are agreed exactly in their opinion about any one of*

* The texts relating to the *secret decrees* of God, are of this sort; and therefore, the *seventeenth* article of this Church is purposely left open, or inclining to a *neutral* sense. This neutrality is very vehemently and disingenuously opposed in the *Confessional;* though it hath been frequently proved by learned men in the clearest manner. There is no better account of it extant, than what is given by the learned writer of the *Three Letters*. See Let. II. p. 160, *&c.*

the articles *; then it may come to pass, that he hath been pleading for a right in nine men out of ten to put *false sense* upon their Bible. Of these two evils he hath chosen the former, as the more specious in theory; though in practice they are but one and the same.

To gain some credit to his own project of reformation, he hath ventured to furnish the Reformers with such principles, as they do not appear any where to have professed. And where they are suffered to speak their own sentiments, he pronounces them to have been *unhappily adopted.* His scheme, therefore, is such as can find no precedents, but with some of the rabble of the Reformation †, who either had no settled principles at all, or were made no account of; and so were not worth being referred to as authorities.

How far he is to be trusted in his representation of the sentiments of other persons, will appear from the liberty he hath taken with Dr. *Clarke,* whose principles fall short of our Author's system, and stand in need of some correction: for which purpose he assumes, as we shall see, an *expurgatorial* authority.

* Conf. p. 4.

† Such were *Muntzer, Buckhold, Knipperdoling, Servetus, David George,* &c. with whom a certain writer of their lives hath joined *Arius* and *Mahomet;* because the first Protestants who blasphemed the *Holy Trinity* were found amongst the tribe of Anabaptists. *Private* REVELATION immediately from God, TRUE LIBERTY, the *Restoration* of the KINGDOM of *Jesus Christ,* and the reading of *no book but the Bible only,* were the fundamental principles by which these enthusiasts were carried first to error and delusion, and thence to rebellion, plunder, and massacre. See the *Apocalypsis,* published at the end of *Ross's* View of all Religions, edit. iii. p. 5. 11. The like *private revelation* was pretended to by *Socinus.* See the *Full Answer,* p. 85, &c.

"*The Church*, saith the Doctor, *hath no legislative authority*. We agree to this likewise*." When I considered this passage, I was rather inclined to suspect, that however Dr. *Clarke* might be mistaken in some other respects, he was rather more modest and discerning than he is here represented; therefore I turned to the place quoted in the Author's margin, and found the following to be his real words: "The Church, in matters of doctrine, has no *legislative* power." *Matters of doctrine*, which are the discriminating terms of the proposition, are taken out of it; and when this experiment is made, it comes up to the Author's intention. We all grant, in common with Dr. *Clarke*, that the legislative power of the Church cannot extend to *matters of doctrine:* for the power that can make a law can unmake it; and then it would follow, that the Church might dispense with any doctrine of the Scripture. Therefore the legislative power of the Church can reach only to forms, and circumstantials, and matters of discipline: but *doctrines* rest wholly upon the power of God, and the authority of divine revelation.

Though Dr. *Clarke* was not loose enough in his principles, some other Reformers are to be met with, who have *happily adopted* a set of principles which approach rather nearer to the plan of the *Confessional* than such as occur in the writings of *Luther, Calvin, Melancthon*, or any other learned person of that age: and I shall now exhibit a few of them (adding an occasional note or two) from a work which came out several years ago as a public paper, under the title of *the Independent Whig*, or a *Defence of primitive Christianity*. If the reader can

* Conf. p. 179.

consult that work, without having a surfeit from the first pages, he may increase the following extracts to as great a length as he pleases.

1. No man ought to pay any submission to that *doctrine and discipline* which he *does not like*. Vol. II. p. 45*.

2. No such person in nature by the appointment of the Scripture, as a Priest, or Ambassador of *Jesus Christ*. Vol. II. p. 152.

3. *Jesus Christ* is sole King in his own Kingdom; sole Lawgiver to and Judge of his own subjects in matters of conscience, and which relate to their eternal salvation. *Ibid.* 123.

4. There was virtue in the world before there was *orthodoxy* in it; which hard, equivocal, priestly word has done more mischief to mankind than all the tyrants that ever plagued the earth. Vol. i. p. 40.

5. Christian Priests have agreed in opposing the

* This asserts, in other language, no more than is proposed (p. 16, of the *Confess.*) as the principle which ought to have taken place at the Reformation; namely, that all teachers should be left *at liberty to disown whatever, after proper examination, they judge inconsistent with the Scriptures*; i. e. every doctrine they do not like, or cannot believe: for what example have we of any single person denying a doctrine of the Scripture, without pretending to *proper examination?* And the propriety of his examination must be admitted in every case upon his own report; otherwise this proposal can have no meaning, and will be over-ruled at the first step. The natural consequence of it must be obvious to every considerate person. The *Arian* will disown the *Trinity*—after proper examination: the *Socinian* will disown the *Redemption*—after proper examination: the *Quaker* will disown the *two Sacraments* and the *Resurrection*—— after proper examination, &c. Thus we shall find all Christianity disowned by parts—after proper examination; and, if this scheme were to be adopted, must be contented with a Church whose whole religion is disowned upon principle. And to what good end? Why, *Popery would then visibly decline*, and the *true ends of the Reformation be fully answered.* See *ibid.*

eternal principles of *morality*, or *natural religion*. The religion of these holy hirelings consisted—in certain *abstruse points not worth knowing*. Vol. I. p. 43.

6. God was King of the Jews, in virtue of a *contract* at *Horeb*: and without a stipulation on their own part, they would have been under no obligation to keep the law of *Moses*. Vol. II. p. 153.

7. Bigotry, chains, and cruelty are always, and in all places, the certain issue of uniformity; which is itself of an infamous race; being begot by the craft of the Priests upon the ignorance of the Laity. Vol. III. p. 223.

8. Tyranny can never subsist without uniformity, nor LIBERTY without SCHISM. *Ibid.*

9. All articles of faith are a *foolish attempt to make the Holy Ghost talk intelligibly*. Ibid. p. 30.

10. I heartily thank God that we have Dissenters; and *I hope we shall never be without them* *. Vol. III. p. 223.

11. The Priests are enemies to *atheism* and *irreligion*, only to disguise and carry on their own designs of wealth and power. Vol. II. p. 100.

12. The absurdities and ravings of those reverend old gentlemen, whom we call the *Fathers*—It is hard to say whether the uncharitableness, roguery, or stupidity of these old saints appears uppermost †. Vol. I. p. 44. Nine in ten of the decrees of Fathers and Councils are so foolish, so incredibly extravagant,

* I hope there are many serious Dissenters, who will not return the compliment; and *heartily thank God* that they had *such an apologist*.

† Our Author is very little behind in the flowers of his rhetoric upon the same subject. "Mr. *Le Clerc*, a much greater admirer of *Grotius* than he was of *a whole cart-load of Fathers*." Occas. Rem. part ii. p. 64, note.

that it would have been below the dignity of an executioner to have burnt them.

13. Dr. *Benjamin Hoadley*, the best Bishop, the best Protestant, and the best man that ever adorned the mitre,—who suffered under the rage of a wicked and despairing faction *. Vol. III. p. 226.

If any reader should think me unjust in bringing these Authors together, I must beg of him to suspend his judgment till he has perused the next chapter. In the mean time, let it be observed, that they both agree in offering incense at the shrine of Bishop *Hoadley;* both plead for such *liberty* as rises to absolute *independence;* both set up the *Scripture* to confute *Creeds* and *Confessions;* and, in their capacity of painters, they both use their utmost art and skill in representing the *Church of England* as a

* Such a commendation, from the pen of such a writer, is the severest satire I ever yet met with upon Dr. *Benjamin Hoadley*. This man plainly saw the issue of Dr. *Hoadley's* arguments; though some others, of a much better meaning, scarcely knew what to make of them. I remember well an observation, which I heard many years ago, from a worthy gentleman, who had been a reading man, and was in the prime of his life at the date of what was called the *Bangorian Controversy*. He said he had followed Dr. *Hoadley* very attentively in his argument, and found him so specious in the management of it, that he became, for a time, a convert to his doctrine. If his principles were right, it followed, by necessary consequence, that men could not be called to account in the Church for any of their words or actions; *Christ* being the *sole judge in his own kingdom*, and having appointed under him no judge upon earth for any such purpose. When his lordship was pressed with the absurdity of this notion, as contrary to fact, reason, and Scripture,——No, replied he, I meant only that Christ hath appointed no judge upon earth able to *see into mens' conscience*. This (said my friend) never had or could be made a question of: and as I was fully convinced by his own words that he had meant otherwise, and was now driven to a gross evasion, I gave him up, and never looked into one of his books afterwards.

monster in every limb; with this difference, indeed, that the outlines drawn by the Independent Whig are somewhat harder, his colouring stronger, and his *finishing* not so exact.. The publishers of that scandalous paper struck at all the foundations of Christianity itself, under the denominations of *High-Church* and *Priestcraft*; thinking themselves more likely to succeed by making the Church *odious*, than by attempting to confute any of her doctrines in a serious manner. Thus too the *Confessionalist*, a great advocate for the Scripture, dares not trust to *that* for his success: but hopes to accomplish his purpose by aspersing all the leading characters, from the beginning of the Reformation, who have shewn a friendly aspect toward our doctrine and constitution: all of which is as much out of the way, and will in the issue procure him no more credit, than if he had found fault with the time shewn by a watch; and instead of comparing it with the time of *the heavens*, had spent all his labour, wit, and learning, in persuading people that the case is made of base metal. How he hath conducted himself in the execution of this part of his plan, will appear in what follows.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AUTHOR'S MANNER AND LANGUAGE IN THE PROSECUTION OF HIS SUBJECT, COMPARED WITH SOME OTHER WRITINGS AGAINST THE POLITY AND DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

OUR excellent *Hooker*, having been a witness to some of the earliest attempts that were made to reform the established order of this Church and State, we shall find it useful, upon the present occasion, to consider particularly how he has represented it in the *Preface* to his Books of *Ecclesiastical Polity*; and the reader, I hope, will excuse the length of the following extract; because I have some very obvious reasons for not expressing *Hooker's* sense in fewer words than his own.

"The method of winning the people's affections to *the cause* (for so ye term it) hath been this: first, in the hearing of the multitude, the faults, especially of higher callings, are ripped up with marvellous exceeding severity and sharpness of reproof; which being oftentimes done, begetteth a great good opinion of integrity, zeal, and holiness, to such constant reprovers of sin, as by likelihood would never be so much offended at that which is evil, unless themselves were singularly good.—

"The next thing hereunto is, to impute all faults and corruptions, wherewith the world aboundeth, unto the kind of ecclesiastical government established.—

"Having gotten thus much sway in the hearts of men, a third step is, to propose their own form of Church-government, as the only remedy of all evils,

and to adorn it with all the glorious titles that may be.

"The fourth degree of inducements is, by fashioning the very notions and conceits of mens' minds in such a sort, that when they read the Scripture, they may think that every thing soundeth towards the advancement of that discipline, and to the utter disgrace of the contrary. Their minds are forestalled, and their conceits perverted before-hand, by being taught—that the sceptre, the rod, the throne, and the kingdom of *Christ*, are a form of government only by Pastors, Elders, Doctors, and Deacons: that by mystical resemblance, *Mount Sion* and *Jerusalem* are the Churches which admit, *Samaria* and *Babylon* the Churches which oppose the said form of government.—And, in like sort, they are taught to apply all things spoken of repairing the walls and decayed parts of the city and temple of God by *Esdras, Nehemias*, and the rest; as if purposely the Holy Ghost had therein meant to fore-signify what the Authors of Admonitions to the Parliament, Supplications to the Council, Petitions to her Majesty, and of such other-like writs, should either do or suffer in this their cause.

"From hence they proceed to an higher point; which is the persuading of men, credulous and overcapable of such pleasing errors, that it is the special illumination of the Holy Ghost, whereby they discern those things in the word, which others reading discern them not.—Then it is instilled into their hearts, that the same spirit, leading men into this opinion, doth thereby seal them to be God's children. This hath bred high terms of separation between such and the rest of the world; whereby the one sort are named the brethren, the godly, and so forth; the other

worldlings, time-servers, pleasers of men, not of God, with such like.

"When instruction doth them no good, let them feel but the least degree of most mercifully tempered severity, they fasten on the head of the Lord's vicegerents here on earth, whatsoever they find uttered against the cruelty of blood-thirsty men: and to themselves they draw all the sentences which Scripture hath in the favour of innocency suffering for the truth."

And in the same preface, he introduces some of the brethren who had separated themselves from the Church, as remonstrating to others who remained still in its communion, "with what zeal they had ever profest, that in the English congregations, the very public service of God is fraught, as touching matter, with intolerable pollutions, and as concerning form, borrowed from the *shop of Antichrist.*"

The success which once attended this method hath probably been always understood as an encouragement to farther trials: But whether we can account for it or not, so it has happened, that this system hath been adopted in most of its branches by every zealous opponent of the Church of *England.*

They who are moderately acquainted with our ecclesiastical history, know the original of these unhappy differences. And they who are not, have a right to be informed, that before the *Reformation* could be settled in this kingdom, the intervention of a Popish reign obliged many of our reforming Divines to seek for peace and protection in other countries. Some of whom having differed among themselves in that forlorn state of independence, and imbibed a set of foreign prejudices, brought them over to their own country in the prosperous days of *Elizabeth*, and sowed

the first seeds of that civil and religious discord, which it may be wholesome for every *Englishman* to remember; though one would wish to have it forgotten by all the rest of the world. "Our Common Prayer Book," saith the pious Dr. *Jeremy Taylor*, "had the fate of St. *Paul*; for when it had escaped the storms of the *Roman* sea, yet a viper sprung out of Queen *Mary's* fires, which at Frankfort first leapt upon the hand of the Church: but since that time it hath gnawn the bowels of its own mother, and given itself life by the death of its parent and nurse *." In behalf of the first *Puritans*, thus much may justly be said, that they were more properly enemies to the outward economy of the Church, than to its faith and doctrine. But the hands of their children have been strengthened of late years, and their opinions not a little corrupted (as some of themselves know and lament) by a fresh party of *Arians* and *Deists*, who have come in as auxiliaries †, and have so far acted the part of Dissenters as to take advantage of all their accustomed ways of arguing, to divide and distress the members of the established Church, and overthrow the Gospel itself.

We cannot suppose that the Author of the *Confessional* had deliberately formed any intention of imitating the method described by Mr. *Hooker*; but may impute his accidental application of it, to the writers he has studied, and the cause he has undertaken; it being natural enough that like principles and prejudices should suggest a similitude of argument and expression; we are therefore not at all surprised, that

* Collect. of Offices, p. 12.

† Of this the reader hath seen a famous example in the extracts from the *Independent Whig*, a paper calculated for the advancement of the dissenting interest.

he cannot proceed four pages in his *Preface* without the use of invectives and bitter reflections; which are nothing to the merits of the cause, and can be of no other use in it, but only to inflame the minds of men to farther degrees of uncharitableness and factious opposition. These are repeated throughout the course of the work as frequently as an opportunity offers; and are every where seasoned with *marvellous exceeding severity and sharpness of reproof*. Our worst enemies will scarcely deny it, when they find that *Scribes, Pharisees, Hypocrites,* and *Churchmen* are convertible terms *.

It was the more laudable and generous practice of the first Puritans, to discover the real *faults* of *higher callings*, and expose them unmercifully to the multitude: But it is easy to discern, that the most unpardonable crime a man can be guilty of in the judgment of this writer, is an affection to the Church in which he was baptized. Upon this principle, Archbishop *Bancroft* is "the *fiery Bancroft* †;" Archbishop *Laud* "the *malicious Laud* ‡;" Dr. *Heylin* "the *firebrand Heylin* §." The Divines who had a commission to treat with the Dissenters in the time of Charles II. are reflected upon for the share they had in the *Conference* at the *Savoy;* which he hath stigmatized as *a complication of sophistry, hypocrisy, and virulence on the part of the* orthodox, *hardly to be paralleled in Popish history* ‖. The word *orthodox* comes in very unseasonably upon this occasion. The subjects of that conference were not matters of *faith*, but of *form:* and the *Presbyterians* of that time, whose cause he here takes upon himself, would have given him small

* P. 300. 333. † P. 225. ‡ P. 24. *Pref.* § P. 228.
‖ *Pref.* p. 29.

thanks for setting them in opposition to the *orthodox*, among whom they were pleased to reckon themselves *. The Author hath here owned something indirectly, of which they would have been ashamed. However, if any reader upon the strength of this or some broader hints, should suspect him to be rather unsound in his persuasion, such a person is to be regarded only as *a sly orthodox brother hanging his ears in a corner* †; that is, as an insignificant cur, sitting and musing by the fire-side. If he should have the courage to take up a pen in defence of his faith, then he is to be reckoned among the "champions of error of the most palpable kind ‡—in the first ranks of whom appear those who enjoy plentiful emoluments from the nature and construction of the establishment; who are therefore concerned to defend every thing belonging to it, not because it is *true*, or *reasonable*, or *righteous* in itself, but because it *is established* §." A very reasonable and charitable inference! But why is he thus hasty to conclude, that they who enjoy *plentiful emoluments* are *bound to defend every thing* in the establishment, whether right or wrong? This looks as if he and his friends had been aiming chiefly at their *emoluments*, while they have seemed to be pleading against their doctrines: and were therefore resolved to understand a defence of their *doctrines* as a defence of their *emoluments*. Or, perhaps, this reflection may be thrown out, to discourage them from defending what he has opposed,

* See the *Hist.* of *Nonconformity*, printed 1708, p. 203.

† P. 318. ‡ Pref. p. 4.

§ Pref. p. 5. So speaks the *Independent Whig*, vol. iii. p. 253. "Who know no reason for liking what is established, but purely, *because it is established*: and will they not always have something very plausible to urge in favour and defence of *their Gain*?"

lest they should be thought *mercenary* in the eyes of the world. But what would he say, if they were to make no defence at all? I apprehend, he would be *in the foremost ranks of those* who would impute their silence to a sense of their weakness; and conclude they said nothing, only because they had nothing to say. If their Faith is received from the Scripture and the purest ages of the primitive Church, it is a principal part of their duty to *contend earnestly* for it against the disputers of this world: which if they should fail to do, he might then fall upon their characters with some shew of justice, and argue in plain terms, that they ought no longer to receive the *wages*, because they had ceased to do the *work*. The Prophet compares such careless guardians of the flock to *dumb dogs that cannot bark* *: and though the wolf will be sure to like them never the better for their vigilance, and impute it all to self-interest, or any other dishonourable motive, yet I hope they will always think *that* silence, which argues a want of fidelity to the Master of whose bread they are eating, the greater reproach of the two.

The childish topics from which these *champions* reason, are "public authority, long possession, the concurrence of the majority, the danger to public peace from attemps to innovate †;" and such like. I do not stay here to refute all these accusations; first, because many of them belong to a certain class of arguments which the injured are not always bound to answer; and for which, I would advise the Author to consider seriously, whether he may not one day be obliged to answer us. Secondly, because they are only introduced as a specimen, to exemplify the first step in his method of reasoning.

* Isa. lvi. 10. † *Ibid.*

The men of Mr. *Hooker's* days having ripped up the *faults of higher callings*, proceeded next to impute them all to the kind of Ecclesiastical government established. And if we ask the Author, whence all this *unreasonableness*, and *unrighteousness*, and *hypocrisy*, and *virulence* arises; he readily accounts for it from the doctrine and discipline now established: which being established, must be defended; and being *palpably* erroneous, is never to be upheld by the writers of the Church, but at the expence of truth, reason, and morality.

It follows therefore, that the natural remedy is the removal of those articles and forms which have been the sources of all these evils. Then would a golden age of Truth, Peace, and Prosperity return once more to the world! And he is so filled with enthusiasm at the prospect, as to assume the air of a prophet, predicting that this visionary scene will one day be realized; when "the hearts and understandings of Pastors and People shall be opened as of one man, and prepared to receive those *truths**, which at present are confined to the breasts of a few †."

As the Puritans were ingenious in accommodating to their new discipline the prophecies and histories of the Scripture, even so would he also persuade us, that *Christ* and his Apostles were zealous for that same species of reformation which he hath laboured to recommend ‡: that the forms and fences of the Church which he hath attempted to overthrow, are "certain *strong holds* and *partition walls*, which it was the design of the Gospel to throw down and to level §;" (whence it follows, that we are *Heathens* or *Jews*:)

* Revealed to us in the systems of *Socinus* and Bishop *Hoadley*.
† P. 335. ‡ P. 229. 300. § P. 171.

that the kingdom of Christ is set up when establishments are pulled down: that the true Christian *liberty*, of which such glorious things are spoken in the Gospel, is a state of freedom from *Creeds, Articles,* and *Subscriptions:* which are *bonds, yokes,* and *beggarly elements, disagreeable to the spirit and design of Christianity* *: that it is tyrannical and Popish to *lead* men, but pious and glorious to *mislead* them.

The adversaries of Mr. *Hooker* made such wonderful discoveries in the Scripture, as they pretended, by the special illumination of the Holy Ghost. That the parallel is exact in this article, I would not be thought to insinuate: the writer of the *Confessional* seeming rather to refer the great discoveries of himself and his friends to a superior degree of reason and common sense, than to the aids and assistances of Divine Grace; and hath inserted it in the class of his principles, that *Jesus Christ* hath *restored men to the privilege of working out their own Salvation by their own understandings and endeavours* †. But though the principle may be different, the high terms of distinction which are bred by it are nearly the same: whereby on the one side are found "the united powers of piety, truth, and common sense ‡: on the other *ignorance, indolence* §, *profligate secularity* ‖, and the *idolatry of lucre* ¶." The one sort are *honest and sensible Christians; knowing and thinking Christians* **—*reasonable men and consistent Protestants*—*serious and judicious men* ††—willing and capable of examining things *without partiality and without hypocrisy.* The other sort have had their character already; being *bigots, partial and prejudiced retainers to Church*

* Pref. p. 22. † See Conf. p. 1. ‡ Pref. p. 10. § P. 25.
‖ Pref. p. 72. ¶ P. 335, 336. ** P. 25. †† Pref. p. 18, 19.

*power**, *starving Inquisitors* †, *champions of public error of the most palpable kind*; from the *addle-headed* Dr. *Webster* ‡, to the *miserable* and *ridiculous sophist* Dr. *Waterland* §, and so on to the *firebrand Heylin*, the *factious Laud*, and the *fiery Bancroft!*

At the reading of these phrases, some will probably be so unjust, as to suppose the Author wholly made up of combustibles, and that he can breathe out no other language than that of persecution. But this happens only when his face is set against the friends of the Church. His words are as smooth as oil when he meets with the puritanical *Abbot*, so *excellent a person*, so *wise* and so *good a man* ‖; or the *worthy* Bishop of *Clogher*—or the *venerable* Bishop of *Winchester* ¶. He is indeed so subject to be turned about by the influences of a party-spirit, that you will find him praising and vilifying the same individual person, as it happens to suit his purpose. Dr. *Rogers*, the chaplain of Archbishop *Bancroft*, who wrote upon the Articles in 1663, drops an expression, of which the Author endeavours to avail himself, and upon this occasion honours him with the appellation of "Honest old *Rogers***." But in another place, he is metamorphosed on a sudden into "*Thomas Rogers*—who extols the Bishops, and reviles the Puritans with the *most abject sycophantry* ††".

The two remaining topics from which the Puritans argued, and upon which they chiefly depended for all their influence with the common people, were those of *Popery* and *Persecution*. And here the Author keeps equal pace with them. His favourite commonplace is the resemblance between the two Churches

* P. 173. † Pref. p. 17. ‡ P. 349. § P. 183. ‖ P. 225. ¶ P. 303. ** P. 23. †† P. 215.

of *Rome* and *England**. By his account, we have some doctrines of Popish original; we have others which naturally lead to Popery; and have nothing to plead in favour of the establishment, which will not equally justify all the *Romish* errors, and even the Inquisition of *Portugal* itself.

Every subscribing Member of the Church of *England* is affirmed to be *in a train which would lead them with equal security to acquiesce in the genuine impositions of popery* †; that is, a train which leads them to subscribe doctrines that *may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture*, will lead them to subscribe the worship of Saints and Images, the vicarial power of the Pope, transubstantiation, indulgences, &c. Therefore these, in the Author's opinion, may be proved by the Scripture as well as our's. To such a length of absurdity will a man's wrath carry him, when he is determined to make the best of an insupportable cause! He will clean the streets of the Papists with his own hands, rather than be in want of some dirt to cast at his brethren of the Church of *England!* He brings it as a general charge against the Clergy of this Church, that none of them know how to confute Popery; *their discourses on the subject are superficial*—and they *omit the* MASTER ARGUMENT *against Popery* ‡. Here the Author is pretending to great things, and, like other pretenders, affects an air of depth and mystery: for he is not kind enough to tell us what this argument is. It may, however, be conjectured from the spirit of his Book, that if we would confute Popery in a masterly way, we must first confute our own Church: and, I believe, if we humour him thus far, he will trust us for the rest.

* See p. 87. Note 7. et alibi pass. † Pref. p. 72. ‡ Ibid.

By the Papists we are admonished, that we can never maintain ourselves against the disorder of the Sectaries, unless we admit of the Pope's infallibility as the *Master Argument:* By the *Son of liberty* we are instructed on the other hand, that unless we preach down the establishment, we shall never be able to keep out Popery. It being impracticable to please both these advisers at once, will it not be the wisest way to argue as we have hitherto done, and not to offer any direct affront to either, by taking the other's counsel? Such principles as these of *the Confessional* have made very few, if any, converts from Popery; and its Priests need not wish for any circumstance more promising, than that of seeing the people of this Church universally inclining to his opinion. The confusion that must necessarily arise if his project were to take place, would soon yield them a plentiful harvest. Besides, his accusation of the Clergy, as if they were already generally indifferent about Popery, or even well inclined to it, must give encouragement to popish emissaries, if they will be weak enough to believe his reports.

As he hath been so free in censuring the Clergy for their *superficial discourses*, and is himself so accurate and *masterly* in his confutation of Popery; he will give me leave, before I quit this topic, to present the public with some of his own sentiments upon the subject. He complains of the unwearied endeavours of treacherous Priests to pervert his Majesty's Protestant subjects to their *intolerant superstition:* but allows, in the very next page, that their notions of the *religious* kind, such as *transubstantiation, purgatory, saint-worship, relics, masses for the dead, penances, and other articles, have no immediate ill effects upon civil society**.

* Pref. p. 68, 69.

He has discovered that their *superstition* is *intolerant;* that is, it will bear no contradiction; it persecutes, imprisons, tortures and burns the members of society for opposing it. And what is this superstition? It is the belief of transubstantiation, purgatory, saint-worship, relics, masses for the dead, penances, and other articles, which *have no immediate ill effect upon civil society*. Did this gentleman never hear of the *bloody act of six articles*, upon which *Henry* the Eighth burnt his subjects for denying *transubstantiation* * ? Why did Queen *Mary* drive so many martyrs to the stake? and to what shall we impute all the disturbances that have happened in *France*, such as regicides, proscriptions, murders, and massacres, but to these *controversies of the religious kind?* He professes a particular aversion to the spirit of *intolerancy;* though (by the way) he hath discovered as much of it in himself, as it is possible for any man to discover with his *pen*, (and God forbid he should ever have the direction of any other weapon!) but happening not to see the connection between *that* and the *superstition* from which it arises, he exclaims furiously against the effect, and leaves the cause out of the question. Whereas, if the *religious superstition* of the Church of Rome were once reformed, her spirit of *intolerancy* would presently abate, and *civil society* would soon have less reason to complain of her practices. For when a man is sensible that the truth is with him, he may possess his own soul in patience, though he sees other people strongly deluded; and hath no more reason to be provoked with them for their misfortune, than with a miserable object who hath lost his sight, or broke one of his legs. But error depends only upon

* See Strype's Mem. Book I. chap. 49.

violence for its support; when it is tried, it is easily enraged, because it is sensible of its weakness; and hence men are generally inclined to persecute others, as they themselves are more or less mistaken. Experience hath rarely failed to confirm this observation. Heathens, under their own religious differences, could be civil to one another, because they were all upon an equal footing in point of evidence and authority. The Romans made no scruple of tolerating the superstition of their neighbours: they adopted the *Isis* and *Serapis* of the *Egyptians* into the number of their deities; and, probably, had charitable sentiments of their *Cats, Beetles,* and *Onions:* but at the same time hated and vilified the *Jews,* who had the knowledge of the true God: and when the *Christians* appeared, with truth, and reason, and facts invincible on their side, had recourse to fire and sword throughout the world, for want of better arguments. But the Christians themselves, in their state of purity, were never guilty of molesting any sort of people, or meddling with the affairs of civil society: though this writer, with a view of apologizing for the factious tendency of his own work, strives very hard to make *Christ* and his Apostles accountable for all those *struggles and tumults,* which, he says, were *occasioned by attempting to introduce the kingship of Jesus**: and is pleased to instruct us, that our Lord would *certainly have prescribed other measures,* had these been unjustifiable. As if he had *prescribed* all those *struggles* and *tumults* of unbelieving Jews and Heathens, as necessary to *introduce* the Gospel, which were actually raised only with a design to *keep it out;* and cannot be imputed to the Apostles, or to the Gospel, but

* P. 312.

only to the blind zeal and fury of its adversaries, whom no sensible Christian did ever suppose to have acted in this matter by a divine prescription. *They found me,* saith the Apostle, *purified in the Temple, neither with multitude nor with tumult.* Acts xxiv. 18. No; where the ignorance, the error, and the bigotry is, there will the tumult be; unless we should argue, like *Tertullus* the orator, in behalf of the *Jews,* that *Paul* was a *mover of sedition,* and was guilty of all those *tumults,* in which he was passive, and they themselves were the only actors.

Upon the whole, I believe there hath seldom been any error of the religious kind, which was without some ill influence upon the order of a commonwealth; to say, therefore, that the Papists are mistaken in their religious opinions, is but to affirm in other words, that they are the disturbers of civil society. Our Author, who supposes any of the errors of popery to be without this ill effect, goes contrary to reason and fact, and contrary to his own opinion in other cases. The Church of *England,* as he imagines, hath its *religious* errors of the *most palpable kind.* These errors, in his opinion, lead directly to tests and subscriptions, which are subversive of the civil rights of mankind. He takes occasion also to inform us, how "the *Calvinists* certainly inferred the lawfulness of resisting wicked and unrighteous princes, from their theological doctrines of Election and Grace *;" though the connection between these principles and the inference is not very easy to be understood. In a word, he "knows not of any truth or error of the *religious* kind, that could be called merely speculative †;" and can see how civil society is affected by all doctrines,

* P. 251. † P. 311.

and all errors, except the above-mentioned errors of popery. Therefore, skilful as he is in the invention and use of *master arguments*, he shall never teach me how to preach against popery, till I want to give Protestants a better opinion of it *.

The parallel which was laid down towards the beginning of this chapter, requires me now to consider some of his reflections upon *persecution;* the odium of which he endeavours, as often as he can, to fasten upon his superiors, both civil and ecclesiastical; and, in this particular, doth strictly follow the puritanical system of opposition described by Mr. *Hooker*.

He complains, that "the Clergy of Protestant establishments have been protected in their opposition to innovations," (that is, *in their defence against the opposition of innovators*) "by the higher powers, as well as *Monks and Augurs* †." It is an hackneyed artifice to couple good and bad things together, that both may appear equally odious. The religion of *Monks* was idolatrous; and the religion of *Augurs* was diabolical: if any man can delight himself with placing *the Clergy of Protestant establishments* in such company, it will scarcely be worth our while to interrupt his amusement. The cases, however, so far as the *higher powers* are concerned, ought to be distinguished. The religion of Monks and Augurs was indefensible,

* In the Occasional Remarks, Part I. p. 51. he sneers at the *Letter-writer* as a man not fit to be argued with, a *pretended defender of a Protestant Church*, because he *either is*, or *pretends* to be ignorant of the *master argument* against popery. But behold, at p. 188 of the 2d part, when he had a little more time to look for it, he says, "I can but *guess* what the MASTER ARGUMENT against popery, alluded to by the Author of the *Preface*, may be." Such are the unhappy fluctuations of writers who are determined to confute the Church, and have no principles to begin with.

† Pref. p. 14.

either with or without the protection of the higher powers; but the religion of Protestant establishments may be generally defended by Scripture and reason, though all the powers of the earth were in a confederacy to abolish it. Therefore the intrinsic merits of any religion are independent of the higher powers; who, in different ages, have taken both sides of the same question. But then Monks and Augurs, through their interest with the higher powers, could stir up persecutions against innovators, who would have corrected their superstition by the introduction of some beneficial truth: and the Clergy of Protestant establishments, by the report of the *Confessional*, have succeeded in the same way. But here the parallel will not hold, for two reasons; first, because Christianity is a better thing than the religion of Heathens, and more worthy of every kind of protection: whereas it doth not appear that the *Calvinistical* forms are in any respect better than the Episcopal; or that the heresy of *Arius* would be any improvement upon the Creeds. Secondly, because the same species of protection is not common to both cases: for the higher powers protected *Monks* and *Augurs* by leading their opponents to the stake, boring their eyes out of their heads, and tearing their flesh from their bones with red-hot pincers. But the Clergy of Protestant establishments, at least of this Protestant establishment, desire no more than protection to themselves, without persecution to their adversaries. If any of them did ever expect more, it was in an age when rigour was more generally adopted as the governing principle of all parties; or when religious error hath been attended with some practices against the state; by which every case of this sort is very much altered: for then the cause is properly of civil concern; and the protection

of the Church becomes the same thing with the security of the government,

We see here, how artfully, by a turn of his pen, he has transformed the defence made by the Clergy of Protestant establishments into an *opposition*; as if the quarrel was always started on their part. By another figure of oratory, he improves bare neglect (perhaps, not so much) into actual persecution. "A man," in his judgment, "must be in a very uncommon situation, as well as of an uncommon spirit, even in this land of liberty, who is bold enough to undertake the patronage of a cause, to which so many, at different periods, have fallen martyrs. Not always, indeed, by fire and sword, but by what kills as surely—hunger and nakedness *." This is a lamentable picture of martyrdom, but it is little more than a vision: for some of the Author's chief *martyrs* have died in peace upon the best preferments in the Church; and, during the state of their earthly pilgrimage, found a Bishoprick, or a Mastership, or one of the higher Rectories, a very comfortable protection against *hunger and nakedness*. If any foreigner were to read this lamentation, and understand it according to the letter, he must of course think it no uncommon sight to meet *Confessors* against the *Test* and the *Creeds*, walking about the streets of *London* without shoes or stockings, under all the misery and contempt of *Christian* slaves in the states of *Barbary!* But such a person ought to be told, that party-language, in this country, hath flights, figures, and phrases, enough to furnish out a tropological Dictionary: and that a man is said to be *hungry* and *naked*, when he cannot threaten his superiors into a good opinion of himself,

* Pref. p. 16, 17.

or get a seat in the House of Lords; or drive those out of the house, who are already in it.

Thus again, when a controversial adventurer of the reforming tribe exclaims against *inquisitions, racks,* and *tortures;* nothing more is to be understood by these terms, than that somebody hath written against him, and contradicted him. The Author of the *Confessional,* in his *Occasional Remarks* upon the *Three Letters,* suspecting that his principles cannot be upheld by evidence and argument against a writer so well furnished; has recourse, as before, to this low thread-bare expedient of dressing up his answerer in the garb of an *inquisitor,* invested with the powers of the *holy office:* and puts such a speech into his mouth as would be addressed to himself, if he were called to an account under ground in a dungeon at *Lisbon* *.

I never heard that any man did himself or his party much good by these dreadful complaints of persecution; and the reason is plain enough; because those real martyrs, who suffered for the truth, and received nothing but evil in return for their good works, took it all with patience; submitting themselves to the will of God, without whose permission no persecutor could have power to hurt them, and employing their last breath in devout expressions of resignation and forgiveness. But pretended martyrs to falsehood and sedition, can find no relief, but in giving vent to all the uncharitable passions, when pride, self-deceit, or enthusiasm, hath drawn them into a snare. When the straying sheep is brought back to the fold, spoiled of its fleece, or even led out to the slaughter, it is silent and unresisting: but there is another animal of a different spirit, which

* Occ. Rem. P. ii. p. 12, 13.

will neither be led nor driven; and against which, if a man doth but hold up his finger, it is instantly tormented with the blackest apprehensions, and fills the air with its outcries.

After so many severe reflections upon every degree of literal or figurative persecution, it might be imagined that the Author dislikes persecution in every shape, and hath a general tenderness for the interests of the human species; but persecution is a terrible thing, only when a man dares to speak, write, or act against the interests of the *Confessional.* Then *hunger* and *nakedness, whips, scourges,* and all the implements of the *holy office,* are set before the reader, to inspire him with a pious zeal against *inquisitorial* remarkers and letter-writers. But if persecution operates ever so sharply, in its literal sense, against the objects of his own aversion, he has then no fault to find with it. "*Laud* and his fellows," as he will have it, were going to introduce popery consequentially at a back door by means of the *Arminian* doctrines, but *were seasonably stopped in their career**: that is, *Laud* himself had his head chopped off before the rabble upon a scaffold, many of his *fellows* were worried out of their lives without mercy and without law; and those who were *more gently dealt with,* (as *Durel* expresses it) *were only plundered, turned out of their livings, or imprisoned* †. But all this, as it stands in the *Confessional,* was a *seasonable stoppage!* because popery was going to be introduced by a writer, whose work against the Papists is as solid, extensive, and unanswerable, as any the Reformation hath to boast of. Sir *Edward Dering,* a great enemy to Archbishop

* P. 254.

† *Durel's* View of the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas, p. 93,

Laud, was so just as to confess, that "in his book against *Fisher*, he had muzzled the Jesuit, and would strike the Papists under the fifth rib, when he was dead and gone; and being dead, wherever his grave should be, *Paul's* would be his perpetual monument, and his own book his epitaph *."

Our Author having judged in this manner, and being now of opinion that "the Church of England still is, though by degrees imperceptible to vulgar eyes, *edg-*

* *Dering's* Collection of Speeches, p. 5. The Confessionalist, who cannot be content without beheading the memory of Archbishop *Laud*, follows the *Independent Whig*: who is for ever railing at Laud *and his brethren*—Laud *and his faction*—Laud *a hot-headed monk*, &c. Vol. iii. p. 282, 283. And speaking of *Laud*, and Bishop *Cosins*, and others like them, he observes, "the best apology that can be made for them is, that they were *stark mad*." p. 262. What apology then will be left for those, whose wisdom, religion, and justice, required them to cut off the head of a madman? When a man's malice is too much inflamed, it gets the better of his cunning. For if Archbishop *Laud* was black enough in his life-time, there is no occasion to blacken him after his death: and the practice is so unnecessary, absurd, and cruel, that if I heard a man bawling against a felon, formerly convicted at the Old Bailey, and keeping up the noise for twenty years after his execution, I should never be able to account for it, but by supposing that this man was conscious of the other's innocence, and afraid lest the guilt should be justly transferred from the sufferer to his accusers and judges. The inflammatory names bestowed on Churchmen by the predecessors of the Confessional, and the Independent Whig, were such as these—*Beelzebub of Canterbury, monstrous Antichristian, Pope, most bloody opposer of God's saints, vile and cursed tyrant;* all this was for the metropolitan: the rest of the Bishops were *incarnate devils, Bishops of the Devil, enemies of God;* and the inferior Clergy were *popish Priests, hogs, wolves, greedy dogs to fill their paunches, a cursed murthering generation.* This *reforming rhetoric* is extracted from a book entitled the *Modern History of Enthusiasm*, which consists chiefly of a series of facts, such as I would recommend to the consideration of those who are in danger of being imposed upon by some of the pretensions of this age. Printed for *Owen*, in Fleet-Street, 1757.

ing back once more towards popery*;" he and some of his com-plotters may think themselves obliged in conscience to effect another *seasonable stoppage*. But we hope they do not intend to pursue the same methods as before, because they were unchristian, and affixed no small degree of scandal and infamy upon the Protestant name. If the author's imagination hath flattered him into an expectation of seeing those times return upon us, it is like he will be disappointed. For the sectaries, to whom he hath taken so much pains to recommend himself, are not such now as they were formerly. Their separation hath given them an alliance with men not much inclined to any of the forms or doctrines of Christianity; and if we except the *Methodists*, (to whom he hath also paid his compliments †) they are supposed to retain in general but little more than the vapid remains of that religious zeal which inspired them with violence in the days of *Charles* and *Elizabeth*: neither is it probable, that their zeal should be revived by his writings; in which there appears so strong a disaffection for the distinguishing articles of our common faith, with an inclination rather to dispute every thing than believe any thing. To this it may be added, upon his own authority, that as there is at present no tendency towards popery in the higher or lower orders of the Church, but such as is *imperceptible to vulgar eyes*; a stoppage at this time would not be *seasonable*. For the benefit of more learned eyes, he hath invented a very ingenious hypothesis, with a little of Mr. *Bayle's* assistance, by which he is able at any time to demonstrate, that the man who is not a *Calvinist*, either now is, or very soon will be, a

* Confess. *ibid.* † Occas. Rem. P. ii. p. 25. 128.

papist. But as this hypothesis hath been contradicted by experiment for two hundred years, in this and other reformed Churches of *Europe*, it is not to be apprehended that he will gain many proselytes by the use of it.

I have now given a short view of those popular topics, to which a very considerable part of the Confessional may be reduced, and which the Author never loses sight of throughout the whole course of his work. Nothing more need be added at present, but a word or two of appeal to the Author himself: not that I am about to make any *sanctified pretensions to charity**, for him to sneer at; or that I shall presume to offer him any good advice, which he would fling back in my face with some ill names at the end of it: my design being only to apply myself to his *common sense*.

By *reforming* the Church then, I suppose he means *altering it for the better*: and he will hardly deny me the liberty of understanding the word in this sense. But let me ask him: is it credible that a writer, who hath treated the Church, and all that relates to it, with such outrageous contempt and aversion, can possibly intend to do it any *good*, either of the moral, religious, or œconomical kind? The tendency of his work ought to have appeared in the spirit of it: and if his sentiments are capable of any application for the benefit of religion, he is much to blame for proposing them in so suspicious a form. Deists and reprobates rail at the Church and the Clergy, not because they wish to see either of them better than they are; but because they abhor Christianity itself, and would be glad to render it contemptible, by as-

* Occas. Rem. P. ii. p. 25.

saulting it indirectly through the persons of its ministers, and the forms of its establishment. If any writer argues with their temper and spirit, every impartial reader will naturally suppose him to be actuated by their motives and principles. Such an orator may easily know how the public will judge of him, if he will but bring the case home to himself.

Let him imagine then, that a physician had exhausted his breath and his eloquence in describing the Author of the Confessional as a monster made up of palpable error, pride, folly, avarice, cunning, cruelty, and hypocrisy; and could never mention his name without affixing to it some vilifying epithet, and pronouncing him absolutely unfit to live any longer in the world; now if this same physician, without being called in, should presently insist upon prescribing an alterative to mend the Author's constitution; what would he think of it? Indeed, what could he think, but that he was going to be poisoned? And who could be offended with him for apprehending the worst? especially if the officious doctor had solicited the higher powers, that the patient might be compelled, in defiance of the common principles of liberty, together with the most sacred rights of *Englishmen*, to swallow the prescription by a public order from the *board of health*, and destroy himself with his eyes open.

A

POSTSCRIPT,

IN ANSWER TO A LATE PRODUCTION OF THE SAME AUTHOR UNDER THE TITLE OF

A CARD.

" THE Author of *The Confessional* presents his compliments to the reverend *William Jones*, A. B. late of *University* College in *Oxford*, and Rector of *Pluckley* in *Kent*, with his cordial thanks to his Reverence for taking so much pains to convince the public that the *Principles* and *Spirit* of the said Author are *not* the *Principles* and *Spirit* of the said reverend *William Jones*. It would greatly add to the obligation, if his Reverence would please to signify to the public, the *true* reason why a testimony so honourable to the Author of *The Confessional*, which hath been so many years upon paper, did not appear in print before. The said Author takes this opportunity to express his hopes, that his Reverence's old acquaintance at Oxford, will be no less grateful to his Reverence for exculpating their common mother from an opprobrious reflection of old *John Fox* the martyrologist, thrown out in the following terms. *Fuit aliquando* OXONIA *vestra religionis parens, nunc videndum vobis ne degeneret in novercam. Audio enim nuper a vobis Oxoniensibus subscriptum esse obsoleto illi, ac jam dudum exploso, articulo de* TRANSUBSTANTIATIONE. Upon the *Principles*, and in the *Spirit*, of the reverend *William Jones*, it may safely be affirmed, that *John Fox* was an old Ignoramus, who knew not the extent of Church-authority, or of the powers and privileges of an orthodox University."

The Author of *The Confessional* hath prudently adopted the form of *a Card*, because it admits but of *little*: and the less the better, when a man hath nothing to say. A writer with a pen so fluent upon occasion, and under so much provocation as he appears to be, would have said more, had he judged himself as capable of giving satisfaction to the public, as of sending a little angry message to the *reverend William Jones*.

In the Title of Mr. *Jones's* Remarks, it appears that he is a person in Holy orders. This the Card-writer objects to him with a low-lived spirit of insult, which demonstrates *the Card* to be a genuine production of the Author of *The Confessional*. He plays upon it six times over, in the following terms—*his Reverence—the said reverend—his Reverence—his Reverence—his Reverence—the reverend*. If he thinks Mr. *Jones's* profession a reproach to him, and can find any amusement, or discover any wit, in objecting it so often in so short a compass, no wonder he hath been so active in writing against the Church and the Creeds. If he alludes to any impropriety in Mr. *Jones's* title-page, the accident is so trifling in itself, and so little connected with the subject of *Creeds* and *Subscriptions*, that the Apologist who catches at such a twig, must be under some peril of drowning: and if the same attempt is repeated six times within the limits of one page, he must be just upon the point of sinking; notwithstanding the bravado of another Edition; which surely would have been better guarded, had it been as easy to vindicate the *principles* of *The Confessional*, as to print them over again.

Mr. *Jones* is presented with the Author's "cordial thanks to his Reverence, for taking so much pains to

convince the public, that the principles and spirit of the said Author, are not the principles and spirit of the said reverend *William Jones.*" In all which, there seems to be a mixture of what the Author himself hath elsewhere stigmatized as "the meanest of all mean things, *self-adulation.*" The Pharisee said —*I thank thee, that I am not as other men are:* and probably that Pharisee meant as he spoke. If this learned Gentleman should be as sincere as he was, Mr. *Jones* humbly thinks he hath as little reason to be offended with the insulting *cordiality* of a modern Confessionalist, as with the more solemn self-deceit of an ancient Pharisee.

The Author calls upon Mr. *Jones* to signify the *true* reason, why his Remarks were not printed sooner: as if the remarks which are wrong now, would have been right three years ago. In his Preface, he hath already given every reason he is acquainted with: but had his Remarks been reserved ten years longer, and no reason given for it at last, except the unreasonable authority of his own *private judgment*, that plea ought not to be controverted by the *Author of The Confessional.* If he in his turn should ask that Author to signify to the public his *true* sentiments concerning the *honourable testimony* he hath boasted of, and whether he doth *really* think he hath acquired any *honour* by Mr. *Jones's* Remarks upon him; every body would see that the question is ill-natured, and implies such an extravagant authority, as none but an *Inquisitor* can pretend to.

Had the wit of the Card-writer been exercised with better success, it would still have given Mr. *Jones* comfort to find himself suffering under his indignation in common with the University of *Oxford:* against which, it seems, there is nothing to be ob-

jected at present, but that some of its members, in the days of *John Fox* the Martyrologist, subscribed to the *obsolete exploded* article concerning *Transubstantiation*. The Card hath been exhibited to some friends, who are at a loss for the sense of this *opprobrious reflection*, under its present application: for how can the University *now* want to be *exculpated*, while they are not subscribing, *for* but *against* Transubstantiation, as a notion *repugnant to the plain words of Scripture*, &c. See *Art.* xxviii. Here, it is presumed, the Author hath a mythological meaning, *viz.* that the University hath now subscribed a doctrine *obsolete* and *exploded* like that of *Transubstantiation*, even the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, by the belief of which, Christians have been distinguished throughout the World, from the first publication of the Gospel; and this Author hath not one argument against it in his whole book, which a lad might not be able to answer before his matriculation. But this parallel, if such a thing is intended, will not hold in any one respect. For *Transubstantiation*, in the days of *John Fox*, was become *obsolete* by being formally dropped in the Reformation under *Edward* VI.; whereas the doctrine of the Trinity hath been retained as the fundamental of Christianity by all the reformed Churches: on which account they are all held very cheap by the Author of *The Confessional*. Transubstantiation had likewise been *exploded*: that is, it had been completely refuted and exposed by the Divines of the Reformation in public conferences and polemical writings. But where, and when; by what persons, and upon what grounds, except those of Deism, hath the Doctrine of the Trinity been *confuted*? To *explode* without *confuting* is the employment of a *free-thinker*, in the bad

sense of the word, who thinks not only against custom, fashion, and the Church, but against all the reason, evidence, and authority of Divine Revelation. When any writer hath once adopted that plan, he is, generally speaking, past recovery; and when he ought to argue, he will sneer, insult, write cards, and be delighted with the repetition of his own scurrility. A man in this condition, if he have respect to himself only, ought rather to be prayed for than disputed with; though at the same time it is a duty every Christian owes to the public, to take care they are not imposed upon by his sophistry.

Lastly, it is affirmed that "Mr. *Jones's* principles would have justified the University in subscribing to Transubstantiation." Not unless the Author is so indulgent to the Church of *Rome*, as to allow that *Transubstantiation* is *agreeable to the Scripture*. Whoever writes against the Sophistry of *The Confessional*, must expect to do it at the peril of being hooted at for a Transubstantialist; this being the only *argument* the Author hath to depend upon; and he hath now worn it as threadbare as the *Reverends* and *Reverences* in his theological *Card*. If he should amuse himself with writing any more *Cards*, the *reverend William Jones* will think it most adviseable to suffer in silence under all the effusions of his wit and scandal; if they ought not rather to be *thankfully* and *cordially* received from that man, who hath vilified all Christian Antiquity, worried all the best Characters of the Reformation, and was tormented with a more than ordinary aversion for the late greatest ornament of the Church of *England*. Nevertheless, with God's leave, and a very humble sense of his own abilities, though with the utmost confidence in the self-sufficiency of his Cause, he will be

ready to follow the Author in any future Vindication, as soon as he shall apply to Reason or the Scripture in defence of his own *spirit* and *principles;* both of which, unless the learned are mistaken, or guilty of gross flattery to the Rev. *William Jones,* are now left under some disgrace.

There are some other words of old *John Fox* the Martyrologist, which, in their literal acceptation, will explain the true state of things between the Author of *The Confessional,* and the Author of *The Remarks—Quod si is essem, qui perbacchari cum iis contra Episcopos et Archiepiscopos, aut scribam præbere me illorum ordini, hoc est, insanire cum illis voluissem; nunquam istos in me aculeos exacuissent.* See Fuller's *Church Hist.* B. ix. p. 807.

Pluckley,
July 24, 1770.

ZOOLOGIA ETHICA:

A

DISQUISITION

CONCERNING THE

MOSAIC DISTINCTION

OF

ANIMALS

INTO

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

BEING

AN ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN TO CHRISTIANS THE WISDOM, MORALITY, AND USE OF THAT INSTITUTION.

IN TWO PARTS.

He is not a Jew which is one outwardly.—*Rom.* ii. 28.

PREFACE.

It being difficult to foresee what a Reader will expect from the title of this Disquisition, it may be useful to inform him, that while I was revolving the matter of it in my mind many years ago, I was curious to know how the subject, according to my own sense of it, would appear to a *Jew*. It was not long before an opportunity offered. I met with a young man of that persuasion, who having been engaged with a printer at *Amsterdam*, for the Hebrew language, was something of a scholar, and appeared to have a good command of the Old Testament in his memory, with as much freedom of speech and ingenuity as is to be met with amongst that sort of people.

To this person I applied myself; and when I had satisfied my curiosity, I committed to paper the particulars of our Conversation, with which I shall here present the Reader, that he may understand the design of the following sheets. But then I must request him not to blame me, if I do not make my Jew more sensible than I found him; and also if I take the liberty of exhibiting our discourse in its natural terms, though more agreeable to the familiarity of a private conversation, than to the formality of a deliberate treatise.

Christian. You Jews have a great aversion to Swine's flesh: pray tell me what is your reason for it?

Jew. Because it is forbidden in our Law.

Christian. But why was it forbidden? what harm is there in it?

Jew. Because the Swine does not *chew the cud.*

Chr. How came *that* to be any objection?

Jew. Sir, you know it is so ordered in our Law: it was

God Almighty's will, and we are not obliged to account for it.

Chr. But if the Laws of God are not unreasonable in themselves, you should consider their intention. The service of reason is surely more acceptable to God than the service of ignorance; which is like that of the Beasts, who obey the will of their Creator without knowing what they do. One would wonder how any rational creature can be zealous in the observation of such a service.

Jew. You would not have me despise what God has commanded, and leave off the custom of the Law! I shall never do that in all my life.

Chr. You would know better how to act in that respect, if you could be brought to consider *the reason* of what you are practising. If I were to ask, why you eat the flesh of the *sheep*, you would tell me, because it *divides the hoof, and chews the cud.* But you eat neither the *hoof* nor the *cud:* so that the reason cannot lie here, but must be sought for in the general Character of the animal, to which these marks are an Index. That you may understand what I say, compare the Sheep and the Swine, as you would compare two men, a good one and a bad one, and see whether you cannot discover a remarkable difference between them. Don't you know that an Hog will be drunk?

Jew. Oh! yes, and I have seen them drunk, and falling down in the dirt.

Chr. But no man ever saw a Sheep drunk, neither can it be tempted to any excess; being remarkably moderate in the use even of water itself.

Jew. What you say is true, but I did never mind it before.

Chr. Perhaps so; but I wish you would think of it: for though vain people mock at your dislike of *Pork*, the matter is of more depth than either they or you are aware of. Therefore give me leave to proceed. You must have observed that the Sheep is patient; it neither lifts up its voice nor struggles while men are taking away its fleece; but, as the Scripture expresses it, is *dumb before its shearers.* If you were to use the same liberty with an Hog, there would be, as the proverb has it, *great cry and little wool.* If you

would force an Hog one way, he endeavours to run the other way; so that he cannot be driven unless he is tied by the leg; but the Sheep goes quietly to the place appointed, and is obedient to the voice of the Shepherd. Wash a Sheep, and it preserves its whiteness till it comes to be sheared: but when you have washed an Hog, he buries himself in the mire, and becomes more filthy than he was before. Sottishness and immodesty go together, as do also temperance and chastity. A tail is given to the Sheep and other four-footed beasts for decency; but the Swine, by a certain twist of the tail, common to the species, discover what other animals conceal, as if it were divested of all shame. It is *stiff necked* too (a reproach which the Scripture hath fixed upon your forefathers *) beyond all other beasts, and its snout is so inflexibly pointed to the ground, that it cannot look upwards to the sky.

You see then, friend *Mordecai*, that the difference between the Sheep and the Swine is much more in the *manners* than in the *meat;* and that you ought to abhor the Swine, only as an example of every thing that is hateful in the sight of God. What honour do you expect to get by abstaining scrupulously from Swine's flesh, if you are like an Hog at last in your manners and inclinations? Have the Jews no swine of this sort among them?

Jew. Yes, we have many who are wicked in all manner of wickedness, and beastly like the Hog.

Chr. Such men ought not to expect that their diet will recommend them to God, if in their appetites and actions they are more nearly allied to the Devil. We Christians, though we have too many bad men amongst us, make it our rule to fulfil the law of *Moses* in a more rational manner than you, by coming up to the spirit of it; that is, by avoiding the earthly, unclean, and groveling *affections* of the *Swine;* and then we are sure that the eating of Swine's flesh will neither offend God, nor do us any harm. Here you may learn the true difference between a Christian and a Jew. You have the form, but we have the sense of it: you value yourselves upon the preservation of the husk, while we are in possession of the kernel. And hence one of our interpreters

* Exod. xxxii. 9.

puts a question, the answer to which is of more value than all the glittering trinkets in the Boxes of all the Jews in Christendom—*Do we make void the Law?—Yea, we establish the Law.* If you could understand the meaning of these few words, they would lead you at once out of all your errors.

Jew. I shall never leave my Religion: they are only the worst of the Jews who leave their Religion, and they never prosper afterwards.

Chr. I suppose it is your custom to harden one another with such sayings: but if you look back upon the Jews as a nation, you will not find that they have prospered much within the last seventeen hundred years. You will argue better when it shall please God to open your eyes; without which it will be vain for any man to hold up the Truth, expecting that you should see and embrace it. However, there was no harm in desiring to know your opinion on this subject; and I wish you would speak of it to some of the more learned of your brethren.

Jew. I will ask them about it: and I think you are right in what you said about the Hog: but we have many Jews who will make a very good dinner of Hog's flesh.

Such was the issue of this Conference, if that can properly be called a Conference, in which a Jew, who understands nothing of what he professes, and whose grand object is the vending of his wares, had one side of the argument. I never received any report from this Jew concerning the sentiments of his brethren; but by the information he gave me very soon after, I have reason to think there are some Christians, who regard the Subject with equal ignorance, and, perhaps, greater indifference. I must take it patiently, if such persons should never find themselves much interested in the following enquiry. The writer who would return to the unfrequented Paths of primitive Theology, must look for his encouragement from Readers of the same taste, if such are to be found. In every age they have been always few in comparison, who were animated by an attachment to the peculiar wisdom of Revelation. If I had written five hundred years ago, my thoughts might have been offered to a set of indolent monks, as little concerned about the Spirit

of Prophecy, as the modern student of the coffee-house, whose whole attention is devoted to Plays, Novels, and factious Newspapers.

In the Age of the Reformation, when all the ancient fountains of Literature were opened, the Evangelical Spirit of the Old Testament was cultivated by some of the most eminent writers of that time; and the sight of it, even to this day, hath scarcely ever been lost among the *Puritans*. We of the Church of *England* are now risen above that sort of learning, as we think; though it is to be feared, we are rather degenerated and fallen below it: and this is one reason why so many false and dangerous speculations have been making their way into the fashionable Divinity: for they who depart from the proper stile and genius of the Scripture, will hardly escape some defection from its doctrines.

I do not here mean to become an accuser under the more popular Character of the Reformer; neither would I be thought to have discovered what is unknown to other men. We have Authors of eminence and genius amongst us, who are undoubtedly sensible of the value of that literature for which I am now pleading, because their writings shew them to be far advanced in the knowledge of it; particularly the celebrated Prælector *de Sacra Poesi Hebræorum*, and the learned Author of *Dissertations on the Prophecies;* from each of whom I might produce many excellent observations to justify that praise which they merit from a better hand. As to myself, I would be considered only as an humble follower of such learned Interpreters: and if I have ventured to pursue the matter of the following Disquisition farther than they would have done, I hope that hath happened, only because I have meditated long upon this particular Subject. I found it more fruitful than I expected, and have been led by it into many speculations, which have been exceedingly pleasant to me in the hours of my Solitude. I am sensible they would be more pleasant to the public, if it were the fashion to be somewhat better versed in that sort of Learning, by which we are essentially distinguished from the Jews; I mean, in the figurative sense of the sacred Writings; which no Jew can possibly understand and continue to be a Jew; on which account it is so largely insisted upon by the author

of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, a discourse particularly calculated for their instruction. Where the Scripture is studied by those who have no private ends to serve by misrepresenting it, its figurative mode of expression will be studied of course; because no great progress can be made on any other principle. It is necessary to the understanding of the Bible, as its proper Alphabet is to the decyphering of any Language. "Certain images (says Dr. *Lowth*) borrowed "chiefly from nature, express certain other notions less "obvious to the understanding; a constant uniformity being "observed in the application of them: and I believe this one "thing, if it were diligently studied, would always be of "excellent use to explain the meaning of the Hebrew "Prophets*."

A gentleman formerly educated at *Christ Church College* in *Oxford*, and known to the Physicians as the Editor of *Aretæus*, had formed a design of dedicating his life to a complete Work on *the Symbolical Language of the Scripture;* and if I had a faithful account of him from a contemporary and fellow-collegian who knew him well, great things might have been expected from him, when his abilities and experience had so great a Subject to work upon. I have much reason to wish that he had accomplished his design: but, alas! it became abortive on the same principle with many other excellent undertakings, the mortality of the undertaker; who did not live to make any progress in the work. This loss, however, is already supplied in some measure by the judicious Criticisms of Dr. *Lowth;* and we shall have yet less reason to lament it, if an introductory Discourse to a new Commentary on the *Psalms of David*, which is now in manuscript, by an able and ingenious hand, should see the light.

Some small specimen of this Symbolical language may be collected from the ensuing pages. Other hints may be gathered from *Erasmus* his *Enchiridion militis Christiani;* and

* ——certæ Imagines, plurimum Naturales, certas alias notiones, quarum subtilior est ratio, lege quadam constanter servata, exprimunt; quam rem unam arbitror, si accurate investigetur, ad intelligendos Vates Hæbræos semper maximo adjumento fore.

Prælect. xxxi. p. 1.

many more may be found in the collection entitled *Philocalia*, at the end of the works of *Origen*; whom the incomparable *Erasmus* delighted to follow in his capacity of an Expositor. But as I am now only writing a preface, without taking upon me to deliver rules for the interpretation of the Scripture, I must content myself with committing these few hasty reflections to the farther consideration of the intelligent Reader; after I have informed him, that this Disquisition will be followed by other like Disquisitions and Discourses on Scriptural and Moral Subjects, till the whole shall amount to an octavo volume.

Pluckley,
July 8, 1771.

A

DISQUISITION,

&c.

EVERY Institution of God must have something in it which deserves our attention; and though the wisdom of any particular Law may not shew itself to a careless Enquirer, who looks no deeper than the surface; yet if it be examined by the rules of interpretation laid down for us in the Scripture, and compared with the State of Nature, we shall generally find our labour well rewarded.

As we did not invent the Bible, God hath wisely provided against our inventing the interpretation of it: the Scripture itself, when properly searched, being sufficient for the unfolding of its own difficulties.

If any subject is left without an explanation where it is first delivered, we find it resumed or referred to in other places; and some new circumstances are introduced, which serve to enlarge our views, and clear up what is obscure. Hence it comes to pass, that howsoever other books may be explained, the only rational method of interpreting the Scripture is to *compare spiritual things with spiritual;* to clear up one passage of divine writ by others which relate to it: and *in the mouth of two* or three *witnesses* of this sort every word ought to be established. Let this rule be

our direction with respect to the Institution we are about to examine.

I. In the 11th Chapter of *Leviticus*, the principal Animals of the Creation are divided into two Classes, one of which is declared to be *clean*, and the other *unclean*: and when the proper distinctions are adjusted, the whole is summed up in the following manner.—"This is the Law of the beasts and of the fowl, and "of every living creature that moveth in the waters, "and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth; "to *make a difference* between the unclean and the "clean, and between the beast that may be eaten, "and the beast that may not be eaten*." The *Hebrews* were to eat of no creatures, but those which bore certain marks or characters in their several natures, such as gave them a place amongst the clean animals: and as to the rest, which have also their proper characters, different from the former, they were forbid to taste or even to touch them, under the penalty of making themselves unclean and abominable in the sight of God.

II. Now if God doth nothing but for wise and sufficient reasons, as all men must believe who believe that there is a God; He must have commanded his people to observe this distinction for some reason, either *natural* or *moral:* either because some animals are *by nature* clean or unclean in themselves; or emblematically so, with respect to other things expressed and understood by them. It could not be for the former reason; because God had already pronounced the whole creation, including all beasts, cattle, creeping things, fishes, and fowls, to be *very good*. Therefore no creature could be objected to on account of

* Ver. 46, 47.

any natural disqualification. And had any of them been unclean in a natural sense, at the time God delivered this law to *Moses*, they would be so still; their natures being still the same: and it would be as unfit and sinful for a Christian to eat them now, as it was to an Hebrew formerly. But this it certainly is not: for saith the Apostle, "I know and am per-"suaded by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing "unclean of itself—For every creature of God is "good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received "with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word "of God, and by prayer *." It may seem strange to us at this time, that the Apostle should express himself with so much warmth and earnestness concerning a subject seemingly so indifferent: but the newly converted Jews being under the prejudices of Education, were extremely tenacious of the observances of the law of *Moses;* and of this in particular, as their posterity also are (or pretend to be) at this day.

III. This distinction then did not subsist on account of any *natural* uncleanness in some creatures more than in others. And but one more sensible reason can be assigned, why there should have been any distinction at all. For if no creature of God is unclean of itself, in its natural capacity; it evidently follows, that when the Law of *Moses* declared many creatures to be unclean, nothing but their *moral* capacity could be intended. Hence it will be easy enough to understand, that although there could be no virtue or morality in abstaining from such creatures upon their own account, it might be very useful and edifying to do so, if a pious regard were had at the

* 1 Tim. iv. 5.

same time to what their natures and properties resembled: as, on the other hand, it must have been a very indifferent ceremony, if not childish and absurd in the sight of the Divine Lawgiver, to observe this law in the letter, without any sense of its moral intention; as children read over the Fables of *Æsop*, not to understand men and manners, but for the curiosity of hearing Sheep, Foxes, and Ravens argue like human creatures. In a word; if this Institution was figurative, and carried with it a moral obligation, it will be found worthy of the divine wisdom, and consequently worth the consideration of every Naturalist, who has sense enough to understand, that indevotion is no necessary part of his profession as a Philosopher. That it really was such as I have just now supposed, may be fully proved from the vision of St. *Peter*; which will serve as a key to open this whole subject.

IV. We read in the 10th Chapter of the *Acts*, that this Apostle "went up upon the house top to pray "about the sixth hour. And he became very hun-"gry and would have eaten: but while they made "ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, "and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had "been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and "let down to the Earth; wherein were all manner "of fourfooted beasts of the Earth, and wild beasts, "and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And "there came a voice to him saying, Rise, Peter, kill "and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have "never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. "And the voice spake unto him again the second "time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou "common. This was done thrice, and the vessel was "received up again into heaven."

Immediately after this exhibition, the Apostle, by the direction of the Spirit, went to the house of *Cornelius*, a devout Roman, whom God had chosen for a member of the Christian Church: of which Society that visionary Sheet was a figure, comprehending people of all nations, gathered from the four winds or quarters of the earth, and enclosed in white linen, to signify the Christian purity and righteousness.

When he was entered into the house of *Cornelius*, he observed to the people who were present, "Ye "know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man "that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one "of another nation: but God hath shewed me that "I should not call *any man common or unclean.*" Here we have an apostolical comment upon the sense of this vision. God had shewed him that he should call no living creatures unclean; but by these brutes of all kinds he understands *men* of all nations. And without question he applied the vision to what the wisdom of God intended to express by it. The case was this: St. *Peter*, as a Jew, was bound to abstain from all those animals, the eating of which was prohibited by the law of Moses. But God shewed him that he should no longer account these animals unclean. And what doth he understand by it? That he should no longer account the Heathens so: "God," says he, "hath shewed me that I should call *no man* "common or unclean:" or to speak in other words borrowed from the Apostle, "God hath shewed me "that a Jew is now at liberty to *keep company or* "*come unto one of another nation*;" which so long as the Mosaic distinction betwixt *clean* and *unclean* beasts was in force, it was not lawful for him to do: especially as Christ himself, in the beginning of his ministry, when the Jews were still entitled to the

pre-eminence given them by the law, had repeated the same rule to his Apostles—" Go not into the way " of the *Gentiles*—but go rather to the lost SHEEP " of the house of Israel *."

V. This Vision being founded upon the distinction now before us, and the sense of it being clear and unquestionable, we may proceed to make some use of it. Thus then let us argue; that if the liberty of feeding upon unclean creatures was offered to St. *Peter* as a sign of a communication now opened between the Jews and the Gentiles; it was the original intention of the contrary prohibition, to teach the Hebrews, that they should hold no Society with heathens and idolaters. For a liberty in one of these cases could not infer a liberty in the other, unless it hath been a truth known and acknowledged by those who understood the law, that a restraint in the one had always implied a restraint in the other. To say that animals pronounced unclean by the Law might now be eaten, was the same as to declare in other words, that the heathens might now be safely conversed with and preached to: therefore, when it was enjoined that these creatures should not be eaten, it was the same in effect as if it had been declared in so many words, that the people of God should avoid the conversation and manners of the heathens. Nothing can be plainer, than that the uncleanness ascribed to brute creatures is not their own; for they innocently follow their several instincts; the wolf when it devours the lamb, and the swine when it wallows in the mire. The instinct of the wolf is not cruelty but appetite. In man it would be otherwise, because one man does not want the blood of another. The tur-

* Matth. x. 5, 6.

pitude of the swine is not moral but natural: it is as blameless as the scent of a dunghill: yet in these things they hold up to us a picture of bad men, who when they imitate the properties of certain brutes, depart from the dignity and purity of that state to which God called his chosen people. Therefore it was well observed by *Tertullian*, that "if any ill qua-"lity is condemned in brute animals, certainly it is "much more condemned in man, who is a rational "creature *."

VI. This subject can never be misunderstood (at least, in its outlines) if it be considered, that nothing which *goeth into a man* can *defile* him; and that nothing is *unclean* in the sight of God but *Sin*. The powers of darkness are called *unclean Spirits*, and *unclean Devils* † from their wickedness. So that if any thing is prohibited as unclean, we must understand it to be so only in a moral sense, with some respect or other to *Sin*.

VII. As there is nothing unclean with God but Sin: so is there nothing pure in his sight but obedience and holiness: which observation, when applied to the other part of our subject, will shew us why some animals were approved of and selected from the rest as proper to be eaten. For if unclean beasts expressed the immoral character of the unbelieving Gentiles, the clean ones must have agreed to the character of the Israelites: as when it is known that darkness is an image of the Devil, we need no other information that Light, its opposite, must be an emblem of God.

* Quando irrationale animal ob aliquid rejicitur, magis illud ipsum in eo qui rationalis est homine damnatur. *Tertull.* de Cib. Judaic.

† Luke iv. 33.

VIII. Hitherto I have deduced the grounds and reasons of this distinction from such passages of Scripture as do not literally interpret, but only imply an interpretation of it; though in so direct a manner, that no doubt can remain, but with readers who are either very ignorant or very much prepossessed. However, it is asserted in the plainest terms in the book of *Leviticus* itself, that the meaning of this law is such as I have supposed it to be. The words are these: "I am the Lord your God which have *sepa-* "*rated* you from *other people:* ye shall *therefore* put "a difference between *clean beasts* and *unclean*, and "between unclean fowls and clean; and ye shall not "make your souls abominable by beast or by fowl, "or by any manner of living thing that moveth upon "the ground, which I have *separated from you as un-* "*clean*. And *ye shall be holy unto me;* for I the Lord "am holy which have *severed you from other people*, "that ye should be mine *." The substance of which in fewer words is this: God tells them, they should abstain from the eating of these *unclean beasts*, only to remind them of their own *separation from unclean Gentiles:* while, on the other hand, they were to partake of the *clean*, because they themselves were to be *holy* unto the Lord.

IX. It is time now to descend to the particulars of this Institution, and enquire, what animals are assigned to the two different classes above mentioned, and how their qualities, when morally understood, agree to the two different kinds of people they were intended to represent. A few creatures selected from the inhabitants of the Earth, the Air, and the Waters, will be sufficient for our purpose, because we may

* Lev. xx. 24.

form a judgment of all the rest from such a specimen. The propriety of a distinction between them will appear upon the first hearing of their names: for, if we review the 11th Chapter of *Leviticus*, we find on the good and peaceable side, amongst the clean creatures, Oxen, Sheep, Goats, and Lambs; all fishes with fins and scales; all fowls, as Doves, Larks, and such like, which are unexceptionable in their manners, and lofty in their flight.

On the other side, there are dogs, swine, wolves, foxes, lions, tygers, moles, and serpents; eels and water-snakes; vultures, kites, ravens, owls, and bats.

All these, and many other creatures, so far as their instincts and properties are discovered to us, agree so well with the different sorts of men, to whom the Scripture hath given them an alliance, that none but the infinitely-wise Creator, who framed them for moral as well as natural purposes, could have distinguished and applied their several natures with so much simplicity, brevity, and propriety.

X. It is evident, upon a first inspection, that there is a wide difference between these two parties, with respect to their manners and ways of life: but we have here a more compendious method of distinguishing quadrupeds by certain external characters, expressive of their internal natures and instincts: those only being admitted into the Class of clean animals, which *divide the hoof and chew the cud*. In regard to these external characters, it might be sufficient for our present purpose to observe, that they are generally attended with a disposition tractable, harmless, and profitable. But I cannot help thinking, that the characters themselves are expressive of moral endowments: though unless they are interpreted with some degree of caution, it may be easy for us to fall

into groundless refinements, and to mistake subtlety for solidity.

Thus much is clear; that an animal with a *cloven hoof* is more inoffensive with its feet, than the several tribes of wild beasts, whose paws are armed with sharp claws, to seize upon their prey: or than the horse, whose feet are applied by instinct as offensive weapons: or the dog, who although he is not armed with claws, like the bear or the tyger, hath feet endued with great swiftness that he may pursue and destroy such creatures as are gentle and defenceless.

Then again, neither *Aristotle* nor *Pliny* need be cited, to prove that quadrupeds with a divided hoof tread surer than those whose hoof is entire; there being a plain mechanical reason, why a foot, which presents several angles and edges, should take faster hold of the ground. I have frequently observed, that such creatures have a surprising felicity in keeping upon their legs, either up or down or across any dangerous declivity. The goat affords us the most extraordinary instance of this sort; particularly the wild mountain-goat, whose agility in conveying himself with safety over the craggy cliffs and precipices of the *Alps*, hath been celebrated by learned travellers *.

It is also worthy of a remark, that this class of animals is not only surer footed, but more orderly and regular in their progress. Sheep have a natural propensity to follow one another's steps. It is their custom to approach the fold, or come forth from it again, in a train or file. They traverse their pastures

* *Scheuchzer* in his *Itinera Alpina*. *Ainsworth* supposes the expression in Gal. ii. 14, which is certainly metaphorical, was spoken with an allusion to this faculty of rectitude in the cloven footed animals—*they walked not uprightly according to the truth.*

in the like order; whence it is observable, that the fields which they frequent are quartered out by a multitude of narrow tracks, which they seem to follow with a scrupulous exactness. This habit is still more remarkable in the Ox; it being the practice of oxen to tread in the very footsteps of their predecessors: so that when a drove of them have passed through any deep and narrow road, they leave the surface divided into a regular succession of ridges and furrows, as if it were the work of art. If brute creatures could reason and dispute as men do, this plodding practice of the Ox might possibly be ridiculed by the Ass, as the orthodox Believer, who is content to tread in the steps of his forefathers, is scoffed at by the rambling Freethinker, who uses it as the privilege of his nature, to deviate into by-ways, untrodden by those who were much wiser than himself.

Surefooting is an image not improperly applied to elementary Truth in Science: whence it will not be unnatural to suppose, that this first Character of the clean Animals was intended to be expressive of rectitude and certainty of *principle* in moral agents. Error is various and changeable in its nature: but Truth, being one and the same in all ages, will always be productive of sobriety, regularity, and Uniformity, in those who are content to follow it.

XI. The other character of a clean beast is that of *chewing the cud;* a faculty so expressive of that act of the mind, by which it revolves, meditates, and discourses on what it hath laid up in the memory, that it is applied to this sense by the Greeks* and Latins;

* Αναμηρυκωμενος τη μνημη τα βεβρωμενα. *Lucian.* In this passage the act of *eating*, together with that of *chewing the cud*, is applied to the memory and understanding.

and the word *ruminate* is well known to have the same metaphorical meaning in English. A beast thus employed hath likewise all the outward appearance of abstraction in its countenance, as if it were engaged in some deep meditation: and it practices the chewing of the cud more particularly, when it is least subject to interruption, that is, when it is lying down at rest. *Pliny* makes the same observation *; and I apprehend there is a natural reason for this, as the food is more easily recalled into the mouth from its temporary lodgement in the stomach, when the body is lying in an horizontal position. This character then, as it stands in the Scripture, must signify a devout turn of Thought, and holiness of Conversation: for the word of God is the food of the mind, which, being laid up in the heart, should be again revolved at all seasons; so that being properly applied to the inward man, it may contribute to a daily increase in grace and godliness. Such is the practice of that man whom the Psalmist pronounces to be blessed: *his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.* His attention is followed by all the signs of spiritual growth and strength: he *bringeth forth his fruit;* his leaf withers not, and his work prospers. All of which is signified to us in some other words of St. *James*—"whoso "looketh into the perfect law of liberty and con- "tinueth therein, he being not a *forgetful hearer*,

* Taking it from *Aristotle*, of whom he is little more than the transcriber, in very many subjects. This circumstance did not escape that great master of natural imagery, *Milton*.

—— Others on the grass
Couch'd, and now fill'd with pasture, gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating.

Par. Lost, B. iv.

" but a *doer* of the work, this man shall be *blessed* in " his deed." Every Israelite, who answered to these two characters of the clean Animals, was blameless in principle and practice, and was an *Israelite indeed* *.

XII. If we are right in general concerning the signification of these characters, the solution will be farther confirmed by an application of it to particular cases. Two animals are described in the 11th Chapter of *Leviticus*, in each of which but one of these characters is found. The *Camel* chews the Cud without dividing the hoof; and the *Swine* divides the hoof without chewing the Cud. With this opposition in their external marks, our plan requires that there should be as great an opposition in their manners. Accordingly, we find the Camel endued with gravity, patience, tractability, modesty, and a constitution almost incredibly temperate and abstemious: while the Hog is the most refractory, impatient, noisy, impudent, intemperate, and nasty, of all the animal Creation.

If we descend to a more critical consideration of their different natures, the *moral heathen* seems to have been censured under the figure of the Camel, and the *immoral Israelite* under that of the Swine. Pride is apt to boast of moral goodness, as sufficient in itself, without the hearing of the word of God. The Camel hath short Ears, which appear as if they had been cropped; and the enormous size of the creature, with his lofty carriage, and those vast bunches of flesh which deform his body, express the disposition of him who is *puffed up in his fleshly mind:*

* If the Reader desires to know what others have said on this part of the subject, he may find the opinions of *Origen*, *Irenæus*, *Hesychius*, and others, very well exhibited by *Pierius*, Fol. 64. E.

who in his own opinion hath attained to the first magnitude of wisdom and perfection. But it is as impossible for such an one to enter into the kingdom of heaven, as for a Camel to go through the Eye of a needle: he is as much too big for the narrow way of Christian humility and self-abasement, as a Camel for the passage of a needle's Eye.

The Swine is an image of him who *holds the truth in unrighteousness.* Of this error the Scribes and Pharisees of our Saviour's time were the greatest examples. For as the swine, if we judge by the print of his feet, and some other of his properties, hath an alliance with the better sort of cattle, and is of a mixt nature: so they were strict in their adherence to the doctrines of the Church, and valued themselves upon a punctual observation of the ceremonial Law: but were inwardly full of *extortion* and *excess; devourers of widows' houses;* an unclean, insatiable herd, before whom the Pearls of the Gospel were not to be cast.

XIII. My subject leads me to observe in this place, that the animals which were *clean* were also *sacred;* that is, set apart by the law for the purpose of sacrifice. The propriety of which is evident, in whatsoever sense we understand the institution of sacrifice. For if the worshipper who offered a beast to God, meant by that act to devote himself, using the animal as his substitute or proxy; then certainly it was not fit that he should represent himself by unclean creatures, whose instincts and manners would convey an odious idea of his own person and character; and consequently make his devotion ridiculous.

In order to make a sacrifice acceptable, it was requisite that the qualifications of the offerer should correspond with those of the offering. The innocent

manners of a clean victim were a tacit reflection upon an unclean offerer. When the worshippers of the true God were corrupt in their principles or morals, their oblations were no longer either proper or acceptable: which was signified to them in those words of the Prophet—*He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood* *. The prophet adds the reason, why their devotion was thus censured—*they have chosen their own ways; and their soul delighteth in their abominations;* with which, such abominable sacrifices as the Heathens offered to their impure Deities, would have corresponded better than those appointed by the law of *Moses*. And this shews us the folly of the heathens, in sacrificing swine, dogs, and even human creatures †: which could happen only through their

* Isa. lxvi. 3.

† *Inter quæ nonnunquam et homo fit hostia, latrocinio sacerdotis dum cruor etiam de jugulo calidus exceptus paterâ, dum adhuc fervet, et quasi sitienti idolo in faciem jactatus, crudeliter propinatur.* Tertull. de Spect. cap. x. The like practice of offering human sacrifices to the Manes of those who were slain in battle, is alluded to in *Virgil*, who seems to have borrowed the sentiment from *Homer*, Iliad xxiii. 175.

——*Sulmone creatos*
Quatuor hic juvenes, totidem quos educat Ufens
Viventes rapit: inferias quos immolet umbris,
Captivoque rogi perfundat sanguine flammas. Æn. x. 517.

Instead of spiritual, they adopted physical reasons for some of their sacrifices; slaying the hog in honour of *Ceres*, because it roots up the grain. As if the Deity were mean enough to take delight in being revenged upon his own creatures, for exercising the instincts he hath implanted in them, and seeking their food in the common course of nature.

——*Prima putatur*
Hostia sus meruisse mori, quia semina rostro
Eruerit pando, spemque interceperit anni. Ovid.

ignorance concerning the origin of sacrifice, and their imperfect notions of moral purity. The characters of their Deities were strongly marked with uncleanness, cruelty, and all kinds of immorality: and as a false object of worship naturally leads to false devotion, we are not to wonder that the custom of sacrificing, which they had received by tradition, degenerated in many respects into downright absurdity.

But there is another sense, in which the institution of sacrifice is to be understood: for every sacrifice had its prophetic use, and was prefigurative of the true sacrifice of *Jesus Christ*: with respect to whom it was necessary that every animal, preferred to this sacred application, should be recommended by every possible character of innocence, purity, and perfection: therefore the sacrifices were taken from the three tribes of Sheep, Goats, and Oxen; each of which were always to be perfect in their kind.

XIV. The Diet of the Hebrews being thus immediately connected with the most solemn Acts of religious Adoration, the daily course of their living carried with it an exhortation to purity of mind and body, and directed their faith to its greatest object, the vicarious Sacrifice of the Messiah.

Unless the circumstances of man under the penalties of Sin had required a propitiatory sacrifice, perhaps animal food had never come into use, the human teeth, as well as the intestines, seeming rather adapted to a vegetable or farinaceous diet*: and if this is the origin of animal food, the consideration of it will reconcile every Christian Believer to a practice, which hath appeared very shocking to natural reason. Men

* The Question, whether man is *naturally carnivorous*, was learnedly agitated by Dr. *Wallis* and Dr. *Tyson*: their observations are very curious and worth examining. See *Phil. Trans.* No. 269. p. 769.

of abstraction and refinement, whose lives were remote from war and rapine, and devoted to rational exercises, reasoned themselves into an abhorrence of animal food: pronouncing it to be unnatural and barbarous, that poor innocent creatures should be put to death for the support of human life, which might well be supported by other means, and with a far better prospect of health and longævity. I say *innocent creatures;* for according to the observation of unenlightened heathens the lot hath universally fallen upon the more innocent part of the creation;

—Non rete accipitri tenditur, neque milvio,
Qui malè faciunt nobis; illis qui nil faciunt tenditur.
Ter. Phorm. II. i. 16.

The *Pythagoreans* are represented by *Ovid* exclaiming in a very pathetic manner against the cruelty of mankind, in behalf of Sheep and Oxen,

Quid meruistis oves, placidum pecus? &c.
Quid meruêre boves, animal sine fraude dolisque,
Innocuum, simplex, natum tolerare labores?

And again in his *Fasti;*

Apta jugo cervix non est ferienda securi,
Vivat, et in durâ sæpe laboret humo.

Unless we were hardened by daily custom, it would surely be imposible for any rational man to reflect without pity and indignation concerning the multitudes of harmless labouring oxen, which are daily led out to the slaughter; or the thousands of helpless bleating sheep, first stripped of their clothing, and afterwards bled to death, to supply the wants of the human species.

But they who carried their humanity to this un-

reasonable height, were ignorant of the best and truest Philosophy, and vitiated in their understandings by that old *Egyptian* Conceit of the *Metempsychosis:* for thus it ought in reason to be. The moral necessities of man can be supplied only by the Death and Benefits of a propitiatory Sacrifice, the common substitute of all mankind: whence the Providence of God hath mercifully ordained, as well by the present condition of the natural Creation itself, as by the appointment of Revelation, that his bodily life should be sustained in a like manner; thereby to remind us every day (though few are wise enough to accept and apply the admonition) that the life of man is in a state of forfeiture; and that there can be neither the preservation of life, nor the remission of Sin, without the *shedding of* innocent *blood.* Thus doth the whole world conspire in offering up a daily sacrifice, and attesting the truth of the Christian doctrine, with the same insensibility that *Caiaphas* uttered a similar prophecy in its favour—*It is necessary that one man should die, that the whole people perish not.*

XV. Fish and Fowls are distinguished upon the same moral principles of good and evil as the quadrupedes; though not with the same physical marks of distinction. Concerning the Fish, this rule was given in the Law—*whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the Seas, and in the Rivers, them shall ye eat.* The progressive motion of fish is owing to the tail: for so may a boat be driven forward by the agitation of a single oar from the stern. The fins serve to keep the fish upright, and support it while it is stationary in any part of the water. The centre of gravity being above the middle region of the body, (the reverse of which is the case with birds) a fish floats unnaturally with its back downwards, when

the fins are taken off*. Their scales, which are very hard, bright, and radiated, compose a sort of armour, which serves for their defence, and adds at the same time an appearance of light and purity.

The fish thus distinguished differ as much in their way of life from the smooth and slimy inhabitants of the waters, as in their colour and lineaments: for such fish are generally disposed to raise themselves from the bottom, and swim about with agility in the superior regions of the water; while the Eel buries itself in the mire, and all the crustaceous tribe lie scrabbling upon the ground. As for the testaceous, an eminent Naturalist† hath formed a new System, wherein they are distinguished from all other fish under the denomination of *Worms*: which, though somewhat bold, is not altogether unnatural, as their bodies are inarticulate, and without the common organs of sense.

The moral of all this is as plain as before; the whole being a figurative monition, that a sordid and groveling way of life was to be abhorred by the Servants of God; whose minds being under the direction of divine truth and wisdom, their affections were to be raised from vice to virtue, from pollution to purity, from things temporal to things eternal.

XVI. Among the Fowls, those were accounted clean, which are gentle in their nature, lofty in their flight, and musical in their voices; which last, I think, is not the qualification of any one bird of prey. The birds being distinguished, not by an approbation of the good and innocent, but by an exception of the bad, the observations I have to make on this part of the animal Creation must be reserved till we come to consider the other part of the subject.

* See *Borrelli*, P. i. ccxiii. ccxiv. † *Linnæus*.

XVII. I can see no moral reason for the admission of the locust, and some other insects into the society of clean animals: yet the *Septuagint* seem to have apprehended such a thing, by their putting the word οφιομαχην for what we translate a *beetle;* and *Pliny* also speaks of it as the property of some locusts to *destroy serpents.* However, I cannot but think it strange, that there should have been so much unnecessary criticism (and some of it even ridiculous) amongst Divines, concerning the food of *John* the Baptist; when the locust is so particularly specified as a kind of food allowed to those who were under the Law: and there is not the least reason to suspect that the word is improperly rendered by the Greek Translators. *Diodorus Siculus* speaks of a people who were called ακριδοφαγοι from their feeding upon locusts; and *Pliny* tells us of certain *Ethiopians,* who lived only upon locusts, dried and salted, so that they were reserved for food throughout the whole course of the year *. And in his Chapter of Locusts, he adds, that the *Parthians* accounted them delicate meat †. Another ancient Writer, who composed a treatise on the Red Sea, speaking of the *Acridophagi,* or *locust-eaters* of that region, observes, that their habit of body was thin and meagre.

Whence we have an unexceptionable reason, why this diet was preferred by the Baptist, as being most agreeable to that abstracted and austere condition of life, which he had taken upon him in the wilderness. *Hasselquist,* a Swedish disciple of *Linnæus,* who travelled about twenty years ago into *Egypt* and *Palestine,* solely with a view to natural History, puts this

* *Pars quædam Æthiopum locustis tantum vivit, fumo et sale duratis in annua alimenta.* Lib. vi. 30.

† *Parthis et hæ in cibo gratæ.* Lib. ii. 29.

matter out of doubt. Speaking of the locusts of *John* the Baptist—"They (says he) who deny insects "to have been the food of this holy man, urge, that "this insect is an unnatural sort of food—but roasted "locusts are at this time eaten by the Arabians—I "was once speaking to a judicious Greek Priest "about this affair—he answered, their Church had "never taken this food to be any other than what is "expressed in the Testament, nor did he know any "thing to contradict it*."

XVIII. We are now to review that other class of animals, from which all the Hebrews were commanded to abstain: and under this prohibition, as hath been already observed, they were admonished, in a figurative way, to avoid the company and the manners of the idolatrous Gentiles.

Accordingly we find amongst these creatures all the ill qualities of ignorance, uncleanness, subtlety, rapine, violence, and cruelty; which were almost as general amongst heathens, as amongst wolves, dogs, leopards, and other beasts of prey; who live by the death of their fellow-animals, and whose *feet*, instead of being harmless, as those of the Sheep or Ox, are by nature *swift to shed blood*. One of the earliest heathen Characters we find in the Scripture was *Nimrod*, the beginning of whose kingdom was *Babel;* and *Babel* being called the *mother of Harlots and abominations*, was therefore the primitive Seat of Idolatry; whence the name is mystically † applied to all the subsequent idolatry of the World. From these considerations, I think, it is clear enough that *Nimrod*, however truly he might be the founder of a new State

* Hasselquist's Voy. and Trav. in the Levant, p. 230. 419.

† Rev. xvii. 5.

and a new Policy, was at the same time the father of a new religion. And indeed, diversity of government, and diversity of religion, have in all ages been reciprocally productive of one another. The religion of this man and his fellows, being a false one, would bring with it a spirit of persecution toward all those who still adhered to the true worship. He is called a mighty hunter *before the Lord;* an expression worth attending to. For though men of warlike dispositions have always made it their practice to live rather by the chasing of men and beasts, than by the more innocent and salutary labours of tillage; yet the hunting here spoken of must be supposed to include an act of irreligion, and imply that he was also a persecuting adversary to the religion of the true God *. His name is taken from a word which signifies a *leopard,* the chief hunter of the desart, the most high-spirited, ferocious, and blood-thirsty of all wild beasts.

There being such a natural affinity between a wild beast and the founder of an idolatrous kingdom, all the four heathen Empires are so represented in a Vision of the Prophet *Daniel;* in which the *Babylonian* being the first and most noble is signified by the *Lion,* and the *Grecian* by the *Leopard:* whence it is well observed as a rule by the learned Bishop *Newton,* in his Dissertations on the Prophecies, that "a *beast,*" (meaning a wild beast) "in the prophetic style, is a "tyrannical idolatrous empire †." The skin of the Leopard is expressive of its evil disposition. The

* And blood began its first and loudest Cry
For differing worship of the Deity.
Thus Persecution rose; and farther space
Produced the *mighty hunter* of his Race. *Dryden.*

† Vol. iii. p. 220.

coat of a Lamb or Sheep, which is generally pure and white, corresponds with the meekness and innocence of its temper; and a soul purged of its Sin is compared to the whiteness of *wool;* on which account Christ, who was without sin, was signified in the Passover by a Lamb *without spot:* but the skin of this furious animal is all over spotted with stains like those of iniquity: whence it is asked, with an allusion to the incorrigible state of a sinner, *Can the Leopard change his spots* * *?*

But the ferocity of wild beasts doth certainly correspond to that spirit of hatred, whereby the zealots for Idolatry were always stirred up to acts of violence against the servants of the true God, and the preachers of righteousness. The Hebrews experienced the malignity of this zeal in Egypt, Babylon, and among the neighbouring nations of Idolaters. But it broke out with greater fury than ever, when the empire of Satan was shaken from its foundations, and the deformity of Polytheism was exposed to the world by the light that was held up by the inspired Apostles. By the permission of God, it was then "given to *the* "*beast* † to make war with the saints and to over-"come them." Then did St. Paul *fight with beasts* at *Ephesus;* with the noisy and senseless votaries of the *Ephesian Diana,* who contended for their lying superstition with all the violence and fury of wild beasts: and indeed all, who undertook to publish the truth, had the barbarity of irrational unbelievers to encounter; such as are called by *Ignatius* θηρια ανθρωπομορφα, *beasts in the shape of men.* For however some of the heathens might be refined by a knowledge of the *belles lettres,* and the practice of the polite arts;

* Jer. xiii. 23. † Rev. xiii. 1—7.

they were altogether savage in their zeal against the preachers and professors of the Christian Faith. Ten dreadful persecutions under the Roman Emperors were scarcely sufficient to satisfy this heathen thirst of blood. It was as natural for them to torture a Christian, as for a Lion to tear a lamb in pieces. The error of their principles confirmed them in these practices: for, though the cruelty of persecution was executed by Magistrates and Soldiers, it was dictated and encouraged by Philosophers; who seldom failed to cast oil into the flames of Persecution. To see themselves out-argued, out-lived, and exploded, by a sect sprung from those Jews, whose religion and manners they had ever affected to treat with consummate disdain: this was a provocation never to be endured by men of unmortified Spirits, who had placed all their pride and pleasure in a pompous shew of superior Reason and Eloquence.

XIX. Let us now compare these different animals with respect to their several ways of life: for these, in the clean and unclean, are as opposite as their dispositions. Sheep, oxen, goats, deer, &c. are formed into societies; they herd peaceably together, and are subject to the laws of government; as well for their own advantage, as for the service of man: for the sheep escapes the merciless wolf by living in subjection to the shepherd. But beasts of prey go about by themselves in forests and desarts, incapable of entering into any friendly communion. They are so many single tyrants, genuine independents, who acknowledge no superior, but fight their way through the world, and live in a state of hostility with the whole creation. If they ever unite into gangs, it is with the spirit of thieves and murderers, who are banded together only that they may plunder innocent

people with greater security. And, like other thieves, they are all fond of darkness. When the Sun goes down, the Lion stalks forth from his den: at which time the sheep, under the direction of the shepherd, are retiring to their fold. And when the cattle are climbing up the mountains to their pasture, to meet the rising of the sun, the tyrants of the night are warned back to their hiding-places.

XX. All those were unclean among the inhabitants of the waters, which were without fins and scales. This exception does not only exclude shell-fish, and the monsters of the deep, but particularly those of the eel or snake kind, which lie grovelling at the bottom, and discover the same impure inclination with the swine. These fish are disturbed by thunder and storms, and swim about when the waters are thick and turbulent: but as soon as the elements are at rest again, they presently slide down to their native mud. Thus the mind, when polluted with impiety and unbelief, cannot be raised to the contemplation of truth, unless it is alarmed by the expectation of divine judgment; on which occasion the greatest reprobates are most violently moved, hurrying themselves as fast as they can into a state of repentance. But the effect abides no longer than the cause; and so their terrors and their penitence vanish together. When there was thunder and hail in the land of *Egypt*, and fire ran along upon the ground, even *Pharaoh* could recollect himself, and say—*I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked—But when he saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more and hardened his heart, he and his servants.* Such is the issue of that involuntary repentance, which has no principle to support it. The body, which rises of itself toward

the surface of the stream, may continue aloft: but that which is raised only by violence, will sink the deeper for its fall.

XXI. The prohibited Fowls are Eagles, Vultures, Hawks, Cormorants, Ravens, and such like, which persecute and devour those of a more gentle nature; or feed uncleanly upon filth and dead carcases; whose *young ones* also *suck up blood, and where the slain are, there are they.* Such were the heathens, whom St. *Paul* hath described to us * as *cruel* and *unmerciful, full of envy, murder, and debate,* given up to the vilest passions, and all the uncleanness of *dead works.* For the nature of man, unrefined by an infused sense of the true God, and the true Religion, is no more offended with evil than a crow with carrion; but can feed upon it, and delight in it. Yea and Reason itself (if the depravation of Reason deserves that name) will plead for it as the greater good: and such Reason can never be expected to approve of the Christian Purity. The Apostle hath likewise observed, that the heathens were *without natural affection.* Fathers have murdered their children; the nearest relations and the dearest friends have destroyed one another, on the ground of some enthusiastic notions of honour and liberty. Besides the superstitious practice of offerring their sons and their daughters to *Moloch* and other diabolical deities, some of them had a custom of exposing such new-born infants as they did not approve of, or thought they should not be able to support, to perish in the woods with hunger, or be devoured by wild beasts: and the same practice is now tolerated among the Idolaters of China †. This

* Rom. i. 28, &c.

† Jesuits Travels, vol. i. p. 85. Edit. ii. of Lockman's Translation.

is like the Ostrich; a foolish bird, which has wings without being able to raise itself from the Earth, and is void of that στοργη, that instinctive tenderness, which other creatures feel for their offspring,—*which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear; because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding* *.

XXII. That infidelity and ignorance, into which the heathens had been betrayed by a vain aspiring after wisdom, was the principal source of all the foregoing enormities. They did not like to retain God in their knowledge—but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. In this respect they were allied to the tribe of Owls and Bats, and other birds of night, all of which the law pronounced to be unclean. In the owl we have a grand image of the Sceptic, who loves darkness rather than light, and is more proud of his artificial ignorance than any man ought to be of the most useful knowledge; who could never find truth, because he never loved it; as the owl is offended with that glory which the Sun diffuses over the natural Creation. As the day has no charms for the owl, Revelation hath nothing wise or wonderful with the unbelieving Philosopher; who brings with him to the word of God all that prejudice with which the owl flies out into the Sun-shine. Yet he has his admirers; as the hooting of one owl is music in the ears of another. This emblematical bird, when exposed to the Sun against his

* Job xxxix. 14, &c.

will, lets down before his sight an inner eyelid or membrane, which in the owl is very conspicuous; as the infidel puts a veil over his heart to intercept and weaken the rays of truth. Some birds respect the light to a degree of Adoration. The cock proclaims the approach of it every morning; on which account his voice was the most proper to remind St. *Peter* of that *true light* from which he had apostatized. But the owl has a natural aversion to the Light: and if he breaks through his ordinary rules so far as to make his appearance in the day-time, he is pursued and reprimanded by other birds as a monster who is a disgrace to their kind; at least as one who has no business with the Sun. When Sceptics meddle with the Scripture, they are just as much out of their element: and to follow their objections, with the hope of recovering them to a confession of the Truth, is like arguing the case seriously with an owl, with the hope of persuading him to admire the day-light. But here it may be proper to observe, that our zeal on such occasions ought never to exceed the bounds of mercy and decency. The birds which express their indignation against the owl never kill him, being of those kinds which are unarmed and inoffensive in their nature. So it is not required that we should pelt and stone an infidel to death for the wickedness of his folly; but should all agree in giving public notice of him, and shewing the world what he is *. For internal realities

* A little piece is just now brought to my hands entitled *Voltaire in the Shades*, or *Dialogues on the Deistical Controversy*. Here the wild opinions of *Voltaire*, *Rousseau*, and some other superior wits, who make a figure in modern *Pyrrhonism*, are compared and ridiculed with some touches of original humour, by an Author who has taken some pains in pursuing their absurdities and contradictions: and appears to be as well acquainted with ancient as modern Infidelity.

do not always agree with external appearances. The outward form of the owl seems to promise a great degree of gravity and wisdom, while its principles and manners are opposite to the common sense of other birds, and its office in the creation, reduces it to the rank of a common mouse-trap. So the Philosophers it represented made a pompous display of Reason and Learning, all of which, so far as they applied it to Divinity, was no better than solemn ignorance and folly: *professing themselves to be wise they became fools;* and by an unaccountable fatality chose this very bird as the Emblem of their wisdom; which was accordingly held in great veneration at *Athens*, the principal seat of heathen Learning, as the Symbol of *Minerva*, the tutelar Goddess of that City. The voice of the owl is, so far from being agreeable to the Ear, that Superstition hath regarded it as an omen of death or some other dismal calamity *: and surely it is no improper counterpart to those howlings and lamentations for the dead, which were uttered by heathens who had no hope of a resurrection.

XXIII. Fowls that *creep, going upon all four*, were to be held in abomination. Such is the Bat: and though this prohibition may seem superfluous, at least in the Letter of it, the Bat being an odious creature; yet we are assured, they are eaten by the people of *Java* †, and likewise in the Island of St. *John* ‡. A modern systematical Naturalist describes the bat to us, by observing that it has six fore-teeth in the upper

* *Hinc exaudiri voces, et verba vocantis*
Visa viri, nox cum terras obscura teneret:
Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo
Sæpè queri, et longas in fletum ducere voces.
Virg. Æn. iv. 460.

† Bontii Hist. Nat. p. 70.

‡ Piso. Hist. Nat. 290.

jaw, and six in the lower, with two dog-teeth on each side, and that its fore-feet are expanded into wings. This may be accurate, but it is exceedingly frigid, and leaves us in ignorance of the bat's distinguishing properties; which were thus represented by Scaliger—*Miræ sanè conformationis est animal; bipes, quadrupes, ambulans non pedibus, volans non pennis; videns sine luce, in luce cæcus; extra lucem luce utitur, in luce luce caret; avis cum dentibus, sine rostro, cum mammis, cum lacte, pullos etiam inter volandum gerens.* It has feet or claws growing out of its pinions, and contradicts the general order of nature by creeping with the instruments of its flight. While the Lark mounts on triumphant wings, soaring up into the sky with a Song of praise to its Creator, this little black monster lies sleeping in holes and cracks of decayed buildings; and if disturbed by any accident, drops down and crawls upon the earth. When darkness prevails, it comes forth from its hiding-place to haunt church-yards and desolate places; as if it avoided the society of all cheerful birds, and took a delight in abiding with owls and beetles near the regions of the dead. The heathens, in like manner, had no relish for the conversation of those who were in a more enlightened state than themselves, but fluttered about under the darkness of Idolatry, and were agitated by low and sordid affections: their best talents and faculties, like the wings of the bat, were employed in the cause of falsehood, or dedicated to subjects below the consideration of immortal beings*: and

* When I lament the misapplication of human abilities, the admirable *Henry Purcel* occurs among other examples. Any proper judge of harmony, who considers his *Te Deum*, and *O give thanks*, with that inimitable piece of counterpoint in the Burial Service, will meet with strains, in which there is such excellence and sublimity

having lost the certain prospect of a better state to come, they were plagued with an imagination full of death and despair.

XXIV. To the foregoing some observations might be added concerning the blindness of the Mole; the petulance and immodesty of the Dog *; the subtlety of the Fox; the poisonous teeth, and double tongue of the Serpent: but there would be no end of descanting on the particulars of so wide a subject. I shall therefore only remark, that as the clean animals were Hieroglyphics adapted to express the character and sufferings of the Messiah; so hath the Scripture applied the whole crew of unclean creatures to Satan and the host of evil Spirits. And the propriety of the application is evident: for if Owls and Bats, as enemies to the Light, exhibit the disposition of those who *sat in darkness*, they cannot be improper to denote the *prince of darkness*. If heathens, like beasts of prey, were rapacious and blood-thirsty, especially against the people of the true God; the Devil was *a murderer from the beginning, a roaring lion* that *goeth about seeking whom he may devour*. Unclean birds and evil spirits are taken in the same sense in this passage—*Babylon is fallen, and is become the habitation of Devils, and the hold of every foul Spirit, a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.* Which expression

as we should expect from the skill and devotion of an angel. Yet the man, who had this power of leading the Soul, as it were, out of the body, and lifting it up to heaven, dedicated the greater part of his labour, and some of the best strokes of his music, to sweeten the ravings of Sottishness and Impiety.

* *Diogenes* the Philosopher of *Athens* affected to be like a wild beast, and went by the name of the *Cynic* or *dogged*. His character is well satyrized by *Lucian*, who says in the person of *Diogenes*—Ιταμον χρη ειναι, και θρασυν, και λοιδορεισθαι πασιν εξης, και βασιλευσι και ιδιωταις. Luc. Vitarum Auctio, §. 7.

refers us back to the Prophecies of *Isaiah* against *Babylon*, wherein the hateful kinds of birds are particularly named *: and this allusion to the Prophet teaches us how they are to be understood.

XXV. It has now been demonstrated from the Scripture and the Reason of the thing itself, that there was a moral design in this distinction of animals into clean and unclean; under which the Jews were instructed, as by an apologue or parable, that this was *the will of God, even* their *Sanctification; that every one of them should know how to possess his Vessel in sanctification and honour, not in the lust of concupiscence, AS THE GENTILES WHICH KNOW NOT GOD*†. For *this*, in sense and reality, *is the Law of the Beasts, and of the Fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the Earth; to make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten*‡.

In the assembly of clean animals, we see what the members of the Church of *Israel* were, or ought to have been, when they were separated from Idolaters, and enclosed within that fold, of which God himself was the Shepherd; feeding them in a green pasture, and leading them forth beside the waters of comfort. In the Crew of the unclean and abominable, we see what the Professors and Practitioners of Heathenism actually were, whether Philosophers or Idiotics, roving about through the fields and forests of the world, without any bond of peace or uniformity; and with the Devil as their Sovereign, the Prince and pattern of Darkness, Cruelty, and Uncleanness, who is *cursed*

* Isa. xxxiv. 11, &c. xiv. 23. † See §. viii. ‡ Lev. xi. 46.

above every beast of the field. And I think, no other observations need be added to shew, that the two opposite parties of Animals answer in all respects to this moral distribution.

XXVI. This being the case, it may be useful to ask ourselves how it comes to pass, that there was and is a difference among mankind, equivalent to what is here exhibited to us among brute animals? The Heathens, notwithstanding all the remonstrances of natural light, were actually enslaved to the worship of Deities more like Devils than Divinities. Their reasonings on subjects of the utmost importance to mankind were weak, perplexed, and contradictory: and their best morality was infected with vices not fit to be named. In their political œconomy a mock-equality was kept up under the specious name of Liberty; which in fact was either a conjunct tyranny exercised by a few; or the state was agitated with popular authority, like a vessel tossed upon the waves of the Sea: so that the alternative was, foreign war or domestic tumult. And they, who were most jealous of their own mutual rights and liberties at home, were inflated with an enthusiastic opinion, that they were appointed the arbiters of all nations, born to enslave other men, and enrich themselves with the spoils of the whole world.

Patriotism and Tyranny look opposite ways, and there may be such a thing as a true Patriot; but, for the most part, these two are like *Sampson's* foxes, connected by a firebrand, to inflame human affairs, and convert public calamity into private advantage.

XXVII. On the other hand, they, who were under the teaching of the true God, were more sublime in their sentiments, clearer in their doctrines, purer in their lives, more obedient and peaceable members of

Society, and more patient under all the trials of adversity; knowing that there can be no comparison between the sufferings of time and the rewards of eternity. Among Jews and Christians, examples were frequent of men ready to bear contempt and oppression, torture and death, without complaining. How superior and how amiable are the constancy and resignation which appear in those words of the great Apostle—*for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter—In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us* *. But amongst the greatest of the Heathens there were all the symptoms of rage and impatience. We hear a *Plutarch* cursing Providence for the loss of his Son: and see a *Cato* tearing out his own bowels, like a dæmoniac, because he was too proud to submit to the ordination of heaven. *Lucan* had no more wit than to weigh him in the balance against his Gods, with a shrewd suspicion that the latter were rather wanting in their judgment;

Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.

Where the truth of Religion decays, and heathen Philosophy supervenes, a surly opposition to Providence, and a spirit of self-murder, will never fail to follow upon the heels of it. For the difference between believers and infidels is not a difference of nature, but of principle. As God hath *made of one blood all the generations of men*, their natural wants, weaknesses, and passions are the same: yet a different course of Institution shall make them differ from one another, as the Sheep differs from the Wolf, or the Dove from the Vulture. There being the same

* Rom. viii. 36.

relation between principle and practice, as between the seed and the fruit, it is not possible to reap what never was sown. *Diogenes* might have attained the substance of virtue instead of its shadow, had he been better instructed: and *Cato*, with the principles of a Christian, might have endured to see another man more powerful than himself, without perishing at the sight. I say he *might;* but it doth not follow, that they who are admitted to the knowledge of Revelation will necessarily apply that knowledge to the best advantage. Truth in the minds of men may be planted and watered, as fruits in the earth; yet the benediction of the heaven above is required to perfect them. But then, as the Science of Nature is not to be collected from the miscarriages of Nature; so an established rule is not to be overthrown by errors and exceptions. Therefore it is generally to be asserted, that if men have the advantage of Truth in the understanding, that Truth will extend its influence to their lives and actions: their passions will be engaged by such objects as will temper and direct, not embitter and disappoint them: so that in all their ways they will concur with an omniscient and merciful Providence in promoting their own tranquillity and felicity, till they have attained all the proper ends of their Existence. *Happy are the people who are in such a case; yea blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God!*

But they, who prefer the darkness of Infidelity, ramble from one Theory to another, as the famished beast of the night wanders over the barren desart; ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; ever seeking, and never satisfied! And the mind, which is restless within itself, will molest society with the workings of its own pride,

hatred, envy, and concupiscence; as those waters can suffer nothing to rest upon them which are tossed with the wind.

XXVIII. Here, methinks, the Sceptic (if any such from the higher regions of Speculation should vouchsafe to look down upon these obscure papers) may be provoked to ask—"And is there then this "difference between the influences of Revelation "and those of our refined Philosophy?" To which I answer, nothing can be more certain: undeniable experience hath taught and confirmed it: and you Deists, or Philosophers * as you affect to be called, by recommending that Virtue for which you have no Sanction, depreciating those sacred Institutions which you never considered, and blanching, so far as your rhetoric will go, the foulest abominations of Paganism, would bring us back once more to the darkness, licentiousness, and desperation of heathens: from all which God of his mercy having called us by the revelation of a superior Philosophy, let us not be again *entangled with the yoke of bondage.*

* *Omnes qui Deum ignorant, et qui vocantur Philosophi.* Iren.

A

DISQUISITION,

&c.

PART II.

I. The Subject, as explained in the preceding part of this Disquisition, will lead us into many Theological, Critical, and Moral Observations, the chief of which I shall beg leave to offer in their Order.

II. The *Law* of *Moses* is the foundation of the Scriptures that follow, whether of the Old or New Testament. Therefore, if the sense of any institution, as it there stands, is rightly collected and ascertained, it cannot fail to open many figurative passages of the Bible: and I think we shall be more sensible of the value of this Law in particular, when we have seen some examples of its application.

III. It was foretold by the Prophets, that the Gentiles should one day become obedient to the word of God, and be taken in as members of the Christian Church in common with the Jews. This event is described by *Isaiah* under the beautiful allusion of a supernatural reconciliation betwixt *clean* and *unclean* beasts *. *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid:*

* Isai. xi. 6, &c.

and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea.

The last words shew, that this change was to take place when divine knowledge should be diffused over the Earth, and Christianity should be as common to mankind as the waters of the Ocean are to the world: therefore it was accomplished when the Jews and Gentiles were reconciled by the Gospel.

This Scene had once been literally verified, when the various kinds of Animals were taken into the Ark of *Noah*. The lion, no longer disposed to *hurt* or *destroy*, consented to dwell peaceably * under the same roof with the Lamb. One common interest reconciled dispositions which were almost as opposite as light and darkness. And as a principle of safety united those within the ark, so it is a natural circumstance noted by the Poet, that all animosities had subsided on account of the terror and distress which prevailed without it;

Nat lupus inter oves: fulvos vehit unda leones:
Unda vehit tigres †.

IV. When the Œconomy of the Gospel succeeded to that of the Law, all distinctions were abolished as

* Και διεσωσεν δι' αυτου (Νωε) ο Δεσποτης τα εισελθοντα EN ΟΜΟΝΟΙΑ ζωα εις κιβωτον. The Lord saved by *Noah* the Creatures which entered *with unanimity* into the Ark. *Clem.* Epist. ad Cor. i.

† Ovid. Met. lib. i.

effectually as within the Ark of *Noah*; according to the sense of St. *Peter's* Vision on occasion of the Conversion of *Cornelius*. With a view to this, our Blessed Saviour gave that unlimited charge to his Apostles—*Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to* every Creature—to animals clean and unclean, gentle and savage, polished and barbarous, Jews and Heathens. And with allusion to the same event, he compares the Church to *a net that was cast into the Sea and gathered of* every kind *. When this commission was executed, that is, when men of all nations, like the various kinds of beasts, birds, and fishes, were assembled together as members of the Church by the preaching of the Apostles, St. *John* in the Revelation hears them all unite in one universal Chorus of praise and thanksgiving to the great Author of their common salvation—" *Every Creature* " which is in heaven and on the earth, and such as " are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I " saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power " be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto " the Lamb for ever and ever †."

V. Here it is worth observing, to what absurdities men may be driven in sacred subjects, when they have no regard to that symbolical method of speaking and writing, which distinguishes the Bible from all other books. Christ having ordered his disciples to preach to *every creature*, St. *Francis*, a monkish Evangelist, taking this strictly according to the sound of the expression, discovered that the commission had never been properly executed: so he betook himself to the woods, wilds, and waters, that by preaching to beasts, birds, and fishes, as such, he might

* Matt. xiii. 47. † Rev. v. 13.

fulfil the command of Jesus Christ, and do what his Apostles, in their ignorance, had left undone.

VI. The character and labours of the Ox are so frequently referred to, that they deserve a particular consideration; and we are now prepared to trace the meaning of them. St. *Paul* *, insisting on the rights of the Christian Clergy, takes occasion to introduce that precept of the Law—*thou shalt not muzzle the Ox that treadeth out the Corn.* Hence he argues, that they who preach the Gospel are justly entitled to live of the Gospel; as the labouring Ox is permitted to eat freely of that Corn which it treads out with its feet for the service of man. This similitude will bear a very close examination: for as the Ox separates the grain from the Ear, so the Minister is required to preach the New Testament from the Old; or, in other words, to extract and exhibit the Spirit from the Letter; and this Spirit gives life to the soul of the hearer, as corn from the threshing-floor gives life to the body †. If then the labour of the Ox illustrates the labour of the ministry, the Ox himself must denote the person of the minister: of which, indeed, there can be no doubt, when St. *Paul* (1 Tim. v. 17, 18.) hath expressly applied the image to those *who labour in the word and doctrine.* It is the opinion of some ancient Interpreters ‡, that our Saviour himself, in compliance with the figurative language of the law, sent out his Apostles *by two and two,* as yokes of oxen; which allusion is also very evidently taken up by St. *Paul,* where he addresses his fellow-labourer in the ministry under the name of a *true yoke-fellow* §; not so much, perhaps, to illustrate the nature of their

* 1 Cor. ix. 9. † Consider 2 Cor. iii. 6. ‡ Macarii. Homil.
§ Συζυγε γνησιε, Phil. iv. 3.

service, as to remind him of their mutual love and affection: for these faithful animals contract such an attachment to each other by working together under the same yoke, that they can never well endure a separation.

In the temple of *Solomon* there was a Sea of Brass, for the purposes of sacred ablution, supported by twelve Oxen; three of which were placed in such a manner under every quadrant of the Vessel, that their faces were directed to the four quarters of the heaven. As the furniture of the Temple was undoubtedly prophetic in its signification, we see in this compound figure the first Apostles of the Gospel, who were Jews by birth, Ministers by office, and twelve in number, going into all the World, and carrying with them the Laver of Regeneration, to baptize all nations.

Now we have proceeded thus far, I think we shall be able to account for a passage in the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, which seems contradictory to the Law of *Moses*. The people were forbid *to plow with an Ox and an Ass together*, with an allusion to which the Apostle warns his disciples not to be *unequally yoked together with unbelievers:* which was the original meaning of the precept, and the moral of it will always hold good. Yet the prophet says, *Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither* the feet *of the* Ox *and the* Ass *. This cannot be accounted for, unless it is taken as a prediction, that the separation between the Jews and Gentiles should be kept up no longer than till the times of the Messiah, when the Gentiles should be admitted to work under the same yoke with the Jews, in sowing the

* Isa. xxxii. 20.

seed of the word, and converts should receive baptism at *all waters* indifferently, as well as at those of the river *Jordan*. How exceptionable soever the *feet* of the Ass might be (for the term is emphatic) according to the received rules of the Levitical law, they should at length be sanctified by the Grace of God, and recommended both by the importance and novelty of their commission; *as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things* *.

VII. Among other articles of the Scripture, which come properly under this subject, is the Prophet *Daniel's* vision of the four great monarchies, under the image of the four beasts, the first a *Lion*, the second a *Bear*, the third a *Leopard*, and a fourth in which all the offensive properties of the other three were united. These monarchies, being heathen, are therefore represented by *unclean* beasts. There is a strict propriety in their arising out of *the Sea*, the waters of which signify the multitude of the Gentiles: and the *four winds of the heaven striving* upon this Sea, and troubling its waves with contrary forces, present us with a grand and striking idea of all that disor-

* Rom. x. 15. I cannot help setting down the Comment of *Castalio*, as cited by *Pole* in his Collection upon the text of Isa. xxxii. 20. "Idque facitis (i. e. prædicatis) *immittentes bovis asinique pedem*, "i. e. nullo Judæorum aut exterorum discrimine. Alludit enim ad "Mosis præceptum, quo vetat *arari bove et asino*; hoc est, si præ-"cepti vim penitùs consideres, vetat Judæis commercium esse cum "reliquis nationibus, tanquam cum dispari genere: quemadmodum "Paulus præceptum illud de *non obturando bovis ore triturantis* refert "ad rem diviniorem, videlicet ad ministrorum alimoniam. Igitur "illud discrimen Evangelio sublatum est; felicesque sunt Evangelii "Ministri, qui omnes, *nullo* neque docentium neque docendorum "*gentis discrimine*, docent." Vide Poli Synops. vol. iii. p. 339, lin. 56, &c.

der, contention, opposition and tumult, out of which the kingdoms of the earth, and particularly the four great Empires, were generated. *Compact* is a phantom raised by Theorists, who copy from their own brain instead of real life: of whose airy schemes the natural tendency is to infuse those high notions of Liberty, which flatter the pride and encourage the discontent of turbulent Spirits, who have nothing to lose, till they throw all things into confusion, and bring men about again once more to the Sword.

In the Revelation of St. *John*, the fourth beast of *Daniel*, which is the *Roman Empire*, is revealed in a more particular manner. It is described as a composition of the *Leopard*, the *Bear*, and the *Lion*; and is said to receive its *power*, *seat*, and *authority* from the *dragon*, that is, from the *Devil*, the Patron and Sovereign of the four Idolatrous Empires; who interferes to disturb the world by the instrumentality of human Passions, so far as the Providence of God permits, for the trial of the good, and the punishment of the wicked, who are made a scourge to one another.

After this, another beast is said to arise *out of the earth*: of which it is to be observed, that as the *sea* means the Gentile world, the proper source of the heathen kingdoms, the *earth*, as contradistinguished, must denote some Power rising up in *Christendom*. Then again, this beast is not of the *unclean* sort, but *with two horns like a lamb*; which is another Character of some Christian Power: and as the context shews this beast to be a member and successor of the *Roman* state, nothing but the Papal Power can be understood by it. I forbear to prosecute this matter, because it has been treated of late years with great skill and learning by the Bishop of *Bristol*, in his

Discourses on the Prophecies: and I wish these hints may awaken the Reader to examine and consider them as they deserve. However, it may not be amiss to inform him, if he is not already aware of it, that Mr. *Dryden*, in his *Hind and Panther*, hath compared the Church of *Rome* to the *Hind*, the Church of *England* to the spotted *Panther* (or she leopard), and the other classes of Protestants to other beasts, equally unclean and more disagreeable. Which shews us how cheaply a cause may be carried when its merits are committed to the arbitration of a poetical fancy. The piece is very pleasing as a Composition; but the two following lines will shew the Spirit of it—

Survey'd her part by part, and sought to find
The ten-horn'd monster *in the harmless hind.*

VIII. There may be other passages, which have either a manifest or a latent reference to this Law: but the foregoing may be sufficient to exemplify its application. I shall therefore proceed to rectify a mistake or two which hath been introduced into this subject.

It may well be conjectured, that a precept so curious and extensive must have exercised the wits of learned Divines: some of whom suppose this Law to have terminated merely in physical considerations, such as the wholesomeness or unwholesomeness of particular sorts of food. And certainly God, who created the body, is not unmindful of its welfare; whence it will generally be found, that the vehicles of grace to the Soul of man are salutary likewise to the body. That washing with water, which is the pledge of a new life to the Spirit in baptism, is of excellent use to strengthen the limbs and perfect the

animal functions: and surely it is not without reason that Sir *John Floyer*, in his excellent treatise of Cold Baths, laments the disuse of *immersion*; affirming that the children of these latter ages are become degenerate and more sickly under the effeminate practice of sprinkling *. In the other Sacrament, bread and wine are assumed to signify an inward and spiritual grace; because in their daily acceptation they are of principal use for the sustaining of animal life. And even the divine institution of fasting is not less effectual for the disorders of the body than for those of the mind. By parity of reason, it may be supposed, that the same food, which was preferred for moral purposes, is in its nature the best adapted to preserve an healthy temperament of the blood and juices. There is this peculiarity in the Wisdom of God, that it attains several ends by the same means: whereas the views of men are narrow and contracted, and their counsels directed to a single point, without any certainty of reaching it. Physical considerations, therefore, may have their place: because they are so far from precluding a moral design in the Law-giver, that they may consist very well with it; while they serve also to open to us a more extensive prospect of the divine benignity.

IX. But of all the Disquisitors that ever took the Law of *Moses* in hand with an apparent serious design, none have erred more palpably than the learned Dr. *Spencer*; whose work, *De Legibus Hebræorum Ritualibus*, would have been excellent indeed, had his Divinity been as sound as his Latinity is native and elegant.

The main pillars of his fabric are these two, 1. That

* See p. 82, and 93, 94.

the Hebrews were a people *pinguioris ingenii*, of a *gross apprehension*, to whom God could never think of proposing any moral instruction under an allegorical form; and consequently that the whole Levitical Ritual was intended, as he himself expresses it, to exercise τον εξω ανθρωπον, *the outward man* *. 2. That as they were naturally addicted to Idolatry, the precepts of their Ritual were borrowed from the practices of Idolaters, and accommodated to the service of the true God: that so their inclination might be humoured, and at the same time their Apostacy prevented.

In these two principles there are almost as many absurdities as words: for one of them contradicts the other, and both are independently confuted by the Scripture. It was a method in the highest estimation with the heathens, and observed universally, to conceal their divine doctrines under the veil of some figurative forms of speech. The *Egyptians* were famed for their *Hieroglyphics*; the *Pythagoreans* for their *Symbols*; the *Greeks* and *Romans* had an extensive *Mythology*, under which the mysteries of their Religion were represented; and all the *fables* of antiquity shew what an opinion was entertained of allusion and imagery, for the improvement of the mind in the manners of human prudence. *Maximus*, in his Epistle prefixed to the works of *Horapollo*, hath well observed, that "the *Egyptians* had their *adyta*, and "*Greeks* and barbarians in general, when they de-"livered down the truth, concealed the principles of "things under *ænigmas, symbols, allegories, metaphors,*

* Vide Proleg. cap. i. *Neque verisimile est Deum, cui cum pinguioris ingenii populo res erat, vitia ulla mysticè depingere vel hieroglyphicè prohibere voluisse.* Lib. i. cap. v. §. iv.

"and such like figures *." They were induced to this, as he informs us, by the three following considerations: 1. That their disciples might be accustomed to a short and sententious way † of expressing themselves; a similitude or metaphor exhibiting that sense at a single view, which is weak and dilute under the ordinary circumlocutions of language. 2. That the Science of Divinity might be kept from the profane vulgar, and deposited with students properly initiated; lest that which was too common should fall into profanation and contempt. 3. That the understanding, being sharpened by the difficulty of investigating a mythological meaning, might set the greater value upon the knowledge thus acquired. The adepts of *Egypt* were conducted to their sacred literature through the preparatory forms of writing called *epistolographic;* to which the next in order was the *Hieratic,* or the writing used by the religious Scribes and Priests; and lastly they were admitted to the *Hieroglyphic,* which was the symbolical writing of their Divinity, and was thought the most perfect and important of all.

X. This of *Maximus* is a learned and rational account. We are now to compare it with Dr. *Spencer's* principles. The purport of his whole work is to shew, that the Heathen Ritual was the Original and the Jewish Ritual was the Copy. But the Heathen Ritual was all mystery and allegory: how then can it be credible that the Jewish, if borrowed from it,

* Αιγυπτιοι δε και αυτοι δια των αδυτων παρ' αυτων καλουμενων τουτο σαφως εκδιδασκουσι. Και ολως βαρβαροι τε αμα και Ελληνες τας των πραγματων αρχας αποκρυψαμενοι, αινιγμασι τε και συμβολοις, αλληγοριαις τε και μεταφοραις, και τοιουτοις τισι τροποις παραδεδωκασι την αληθειαν.

† Προς βρακυλογιας ασκησιν.

should yet have no mystery at all? Did the perfection of *Egyptian* wisdom consist in throwing a metaphorical veil over their precepts? and could it be the perfection of a *Moses*, educated in the School of *Egypt*, to deliver things according to the lowest literal mode of expression? Surely this could never be: and if not, Dr. *Spencer's* Scheme is a contradiction to itself.

But he objects, that the Jews were a people of a gross apprehension, unfit for all the refinements of allusion. Too many of them were so, and therefore took their Law for such a System as Dr. *Spencer* has made of it: in which they are not singular; for the Vulgar, whether Jews, Heathens, or Christians, have always miscarried by taking images for realities: and if I speak to the intelligent, I need not stay to prove it*. To say, as this learned man doth, that the Law was intended only for the *outward man*, is formally to contradict the New Testament: for then it would have followed, that he was truly a Jew who was such outwardly: but saith the Apostle, *he is a Jew which is one outwardly*, and *circumcision is that of the heart*: which is no new doctrine, but agreeable only to what *Moses* had published before.

XI. By another mistake, Dr. *Spencer* has given the seniority to Heathenism: and to support it, shews from heathen authors, with much learning, that many Ritual Laws were common both to the Hebrews and the Heathens. Which is not to be wondered at, because if we go far enough backward, we come at length to one common fountain of Patriarchal Tradition. "There is one observation (says Dr. *Shuck-*"*ford)* which, as far as I have had opportunity to "apply it, will fully answer every particular that Dr.

* See the xiiith Chapter of Monsieur *Paschal's* Thoughts.

"*Spencer* has offered; which is this, that he is able "to produce no one ceremony or usage practised "both in the Religion of *Abraham* or *Moses* and in "that of the Heathen nations, but that it may be "proved that it was used by *Abraham* or *Moses*, or "by some of the true worshippers of God, earlier "than by any of the Heathen nations *." Whoever examines the sacred history with attention, will discover that the principal Rites of the Levitical Law were in use before the time of *Moses*; that is, during the Patriarchal State of the Church: and I have seen a work of the last century in the *Bodleian* Library with the title of *Lex ante Legem*. The subject is curious, and cannot be without its use if treated with judgment. With regard to this Law in particular concerning the distinction of animals the case is very plain; because it appears from the practice of *Noah*, that such a distinction had taken place before the Flood. Here Dr. *Spencer* is at his wit's end, being driven to the supposition or presumption, that beasts were called clean and unclean by anticipation †: but they were not only *called* so; for they were actually taken as such, and applied as such, as effectually as by the institution and practice of the Mosaic Law.

XII. It happens, however, that the reasonings of this learned writer lead him frequently astray from his principles, so as to render his work remarkably inconsistent. Thus, for example, he rejects with scorn the figurative sense of this Law, as a sort of *light bread* offensive to the taste of every intelligent Reader: unhappily alluding to that other figurative Diet, which the carnal Israelites rejected in the wil-

* Shuckford's Connect. vol. i. p. 157.

† *Ut mundorum et immundorum animalium in historiâ diluvii κατα προληψιν mentionem fecisse videatur.* Lib. i. cap. v. §. v.

derness. Yet he hath asserted * its figurative sense as expressly as I have done, and hath even proved it by a text of the New Testament, which had never occurred in my own researches. With regard to its figurative use in separating the Jews from the Gentiles, he reasons thus—"Why should the Jews with-"draw themselves so rigorously from the Company "of the heathens, unless they were enjoined so to do "by this law concerning the distinction of meats? "for whosoever shall diligently examine the Book of "*Moses*, will see that there is no other law which "clearly and expressly obliges the Jews to avoid all "familiarity with foreign nations." In another place he suspects it was intended as an admonition to mental sanctification; and adds a learned and proper remark to confirm his suspicion. "God ordained this "distinction of meats, that the puerile nation of the "Hebrews might be led by an application of this law "to the first elements of sanctity and actual purity. "And this conjecture is founded upon the reason "God himself hath assigned for this institution; for "after he had delivered the law about separating the "clean animal from the unclean, he immediately "adds, *be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.* "Which words St. *Peter* applies not to legal but to "evangelical sanctity, such as we should aspire to "through the whole course of our lives. I must not "deny that the text of Leviticus, in the outward "Letter, requires only a sort of legal sanctity, ex-"tending merely to corporeal purification:" (*i. e.* that the Letter of the Law is the Letter of it) "but it is "agreeable to the *umbratic nature* of that Law, that "we should believe those words to have contained a

* Lib. i. cap. v. §. iv.

" more sacred meaning at the bottom, and to have " directed the Jews to a sort of purity properly so " called, and conformable to that of the Divine Na- " ture itself, under the figure of external purifica- " tion." This passage affirms of the subject in general what I have endeavoured to shew of its several particulars: for that which is true of the whole must be true of the parts. So that we have no opposition from the ingenious Dr. *Spencer*, but so far only as he is opposite to himself.

XIII. I think it must occur, after what hath been said, that the All-wise Creator had moral ends in view, as well as natural, in the formation of the World, and particularly in the establishment of the Brute Œconomy. Reason is a principle more sublime than Instinct, yet Reason may be greatly improved, and the benefit of Society may be as greatly advanced, by a proper attention to the various instincts of animals. As the *Sluggard* is reproved by the example of the provident and industrious *Ant*, other men may see other mistakes and failings rectified by the conduct of other animals; so that it may be said with propriety of them, as it was said of the Ant— *Consider* their *ways and be wise.* I think it is but just to assert, that this moral use of the animal Creation was originally *intended* in the formation of the World: because it would be a supposition unworthy of God, that the works of nature should be capable of answering any good end, which his wisdom did not foresee, and consequently design.

XIV. The manners of mankind, being derived more from Custom and Education than from Nature, are subject to vary with their circumstances, and are scarcely exempt even from the mutability of fashion itself. But brute animals are not free agents, because

they were not designed to be moral agents; for morality, intellectual purity, and religious wisdom, are and must be by their nature the objects of choice. Brutes are therefore neither able to disguise their dispositions, nor to change the objects of their attention: on which account they are a never-failing source of instruction, holding out to mankind the same admonitions in every age of the world.

In respect of its certainty and immutability, Instinct is far superior to Reason: but man has this unquestionable superiority over the brutes, that he views them not brutishly, as they view him, but rationally: that is, with a sense of the infinite wisdom of their Maker, and with an application of their various properties to the improvement of the mind in Wisdom and Religion. He who looks upon brutes, as brutes look upon men, without learning any thing from them, loses this privilege of his Reason. And certainly, if God had moral views in the ordering of the world, it ought to be considered with a moral intention; which practice will lead us to a sort of Philosophy most worthy of a rational mind, the Candidate of an higher and invisible world. Naturalists may amuse themselves with counting the teeth of beasts, the scales of a snake, the threads of a flower, or the microscopical feathers upon the wing of a moth; and amaze the ignorant with a grand display of superficial Literature; which may serve excellently well for order and distinction, as the titles upon the drawers in the shop of the apothecary: but they see not the highest Wisdom of God in the Creation, till they discover the spiritual through the natural world, which no Glass but that of the Scripture will enable them to do. The Christian only can feel the force of those words—*Lord! how manifold are thy works, in*

wisdom hast thou made them all! The more we examine things by the proper light, the more we shall be convinced that the natural and Moral Systems of God are allied throughout to one another: and whatever may be suspected to the disparagement of REVELATION by the half-learned unbeliever, whose Vanity hath put out the Eyes of his understanding, it will be found to have the attestation of all Nature. Every blast of Air that blows, every blade of Grass that springeth up from the ground, and every living Creature that moveth upon the face of the Earth, is, in some respect or other, subservient to the Philosophy of the Gospel. So that if any man would be a rational Infidel, he must find some other world to reason in: this world is the school of Christianity.

XV. Whether the Heathens derived this article of their wisdom from Oriental Tradition, or whether it was the offspring of their own Reason and Contemplation, they certainly saw, in some measure, the moral use of the animal Creation; which is applied by the fables of *Æsop* in particular so excellently well to the purposes of morality, that some have judged his productions but little short of inspiration *. They are without exception the best vehicles of moral instruction to young minds, more apt to be delighted with examples than abstractions; and I know not of any more valuable treasure that has descended to us from Pagan Antiquity. The Ancients were so attached to this figurative use of the animals, that the *Egyptians* in their *Hieroglyphics* assumed them as Characters to denote all the powers or depravities of the human mind, the excellencies of art and the errors of ignorance, the policy of the wise and the sim-

* Αισωπος δε δοκει μη πορρω θειοτερας επινοιας των ηθικης διδασκαλιας αψαμενος. Max. Planud. in Vitâ Æsopi.

plicity of fools. They even filled the heaven itself with them, expressing thereby the nature of the Elements, and accommodating them to the celestial phænomena; placing the figure of the *Crab* at that point of the Zodiac, when the Sun, having attained the height of the Summer, begins to *go backward* again toward the winter; and the figure of the *Capricorn* or mountain Goat, at the lower Tropic, where the Sun begins to *climb upwards* toward the northern hemisphere. The two *Bears*, inhabitants of the coldest Climates, are placed by the North Pole, over the regions of perpetual frost and snow; the Lion, the Egyptian Symbol of the Solar Light *, in that part of the Zodiac which corresponded formerly to the month of *July*, when the Heat of the Sun is most predominant: and the like propriety of expression might be traced in others of the celestial figures, which may seem to have been placed with no other design than that general one of parcelling out the Stars into intelligible tribes or classes. The fabulous origin given to them by some of the Greeks and Latins is altogether childish and ridiculous.

XVI. Here it is to be observed, that the heathens having erred in their notions of honour and excellence, some of their highest virtues having been no better than celebrated vices; they have on many occasions given the precedence to unclean animals, adorning even their Divinities with the skins of Beasts of Prey. The appetite for honour, as it signifies military glory, being attended with a thirst of

* Κεφαλην γαρ εχει μεγαλην το ζωον. Και τας μεν κορας πυρωδεις, το δε προσωπον στρογγυλον· Και περι αυτο ακτινοειδεις τριχας κατα μιμησιν ηλιου, οθεν και υπο τον θρονον του ωρου λεοντας υποτιθεασι, δεικνυντες το προς τον θεον του ζωου συμβολον. Horapoll. Hierogl. lib. i. cap. xvii.

blood, it is not strange that the mighty warriors and hunters of the world should have chosen to array themselves with the spoils of Lions, Leopards, Tygers, and Bears, their rivals in cruelty. But the servants of God, who had the more valuable ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, are said to have *wandered about in sheeps skins and goats skins*, in a *world* that was *not worthy* of them. They preferred the appearance of those Creatures, who like themselves had been helpless, persecuted, and yet most serviceable to the world. Our Saviour supposes all his followers to be in *sheeps-clothing;* warning us at the same time that many should assume the habit of the sheep, though allied more nearly in their appetites and manners, their internal character, to the ravening wolf. And it seems agreeable to reason, that the Providence of God hath designedly furnished the sheep with the best materials for human clothing, as it were to remind us daily what Spirit we should be of. It is difficult to account for those coats of skins * which God gave to *Adam* and *Eve*, to clothe them before their expulsion from Paradise, but by supposing them to have been the skins of animals slain for sacrifice, in consequence of the fall: and if such, they were of the clean sort, amongst which the Sheep had the preference, being afterwards appropriated to the daily service of the Tabernacle and Temple.

XVII. In the modern Science of Honour, commonly called Heraldry, the principal Characters are taken from the animal kingdom. But here again the chief place is given to Beasts and Birds of the savage and rapacious kinds. *Cornelius Agrippa*, in his work upon the *Vanity of the Sciences*, which is a Satire

* Gen. iii. 21.

upon all orders and professions, but rather too precipitate and unmerciful, takes occasion from this circumstance to fall foul upon all the Titles of Honour and Nobility, as having their original in *Theft, Murder, and Rapine.* "It is unlawful (saith he) for No-"blemen to bear in their Coats an Ox, a Calf, a Sheep, "a Lamb, a Capon, an Hen, or any of those Creatures "which are necessary for the use of mankind; but "they must all carry for the Ensigns of their nobility "the resemblances of cruel monsters and birds of "Prey.—There be many of the smaller animals also "that claim a prerogative in the shields of great men, "provided they are the *documentors of mischief.*— "Those shields that are blazoned with things that "are less noxious, as Trees, Flowers, Stars, or are "otherwise distinguished only by variety of colours, "are accounted much more modern and less noble "than the other, as not being acquired by any acts "of war, or other artifices of Ruin and Destruction*." It is indeed very true, that the chief and perhaps the only merit of some, who have been raised to that Honour by which their posterity are ennobled at this day, consisted in their adhering to the fortune of some Tyrannical Invader, who took that to which he had no Right but from the Sword; and rewarded his accomplices with Inheritances violently taken away from the lawful Possessors. Yet after all, there is a Military Virtue, which ought to be distinguished as a proper foundation of Nobility. For as some have been raised by the ruin of the innocent; others have received the honours they justly deserved for delivering their Country at the hazard of their lives: a service which the strictest laws of Christianity have not

* Chap lxxxi.

condemned, though *peace on earth* is its principal object. For, as things are now constituted, peace and good order are the consequences only of war: and *John the Baptist*, who was sent to reform all orders of men, did not censure but rectify the profession of a soldier: who ought never to *begin* a quarrel, nor proceed to bloodshed upon *false accusations*. And all *Kings*, who are Soldiers by their office, should lay up this Counsel in their hearts.

XVIII. But leaving Heathens, Mythologists, and Heralds, it concerns us more immediately as Christians to consider how it comes to pass, that we are not now obliged to a literal observation of this Law. For this there are two Reasons. 1. Because it is better to fulfil the Spirit than to observe the Letter of the Law. The Gospel enjoins all that purity without a figure, which the Law suggested to the Jews under the distinction of meats. He, who has attained that purity of heart, hath already answered the end of the Law; in which case the descriptive or ceremonial part may be rejected as a yoke of bondage no longer necessary. In this moral part the Jews miscarried: the Apostle having taught us, they *were not profited by the meats in which they were occupied* *. It was the design of the Great Lawgiver that they should be *profited*: such was the admonition which this distinction held forth to them: but they were not. They had the form, without that *grace* to which it should have led them: while Christians, on the contrary, having that grace which the Jews wanted, are dispensed with concerning the form. The Law and its meaning is written in their hearts, and manifested in their lives. Instead of making void the Law, they

* Heb. xiii. 9.

establish it by keeping up to its intention. *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost:* it is all that the figurative meat and drink of the Law signified and recommended. The food that is clean and holy is a true faith, and a life separated from Sin. He who is thus distinguished from other men, is the Guest of God, and hath communion with Christ, whose *meat* was to *do the will of the Father that sent him.*

On this consideration we are released from the literal observation of the Law. That practice is now superseded by a better, which will bring us to a nearer alliance with God. Another consideration is this; that the Gentiles, being admitted to the Gospel, are no more to be accounted common or unclean. For the separation of the Jews was kept up, as Dr. *Spencer* hath learnedly remarked, by the observation of this Law in particular: and as that separation subsists no longer, the Law is of course become obsolete.

XIX. But though the Divine Mercy hath accepted men of every kind to the privileges of Christianity, it cannot be too often repeated, because it ought never to be forgotten, that *Jesus Christ* did not come to save men *in* their sins, but from the dominion of sin and all its evil consequences. The Church is therefore not to be used as a sanctuary to all manner of iniquity. On the contrary, they who enter into it should put off their savage natures, as the animals which entered into the ark of *Noah*. The Gospel is more excellent than other Systems, because it hath a power of changing the manners by rectifying the passions. For Pride will have the effects of Pride; Covetousness will be followed by fraud and rapine; Ambition and worldly Policy will transform Chris-

tians into monsters, let them loose upon one another, and introduce such disorders amongst them as formerly among the Heathens. This is finely touched by Dr. *Young*, and in such terms as fall in with our present subject;

> Eager ambition's fiery chace I see;
> I see the circling hunt of noisy men
> Burst Law's Enclosure, leap the mounds of Right,
> Pursuing and pursued, each other's prey:
> As wolves for rapine, as the fox for wiles;
> Till *Death*, that mighty Hunter, earths them all.
>
> *Night IV.*

XX. Let every man then examine his own heart, and review his Character as it is reflected to him in this Mirror of the Animal Creation. Let him consider whether he is honest, industrious, and profitable to Society, as the labouring Ox; meek and patient as the Lamb; or whether he returns as the Dog to his vomit, and as the Sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire: whether he is harmless as the Dove, or subtle as the Fox, and rapacious as the Vulture: whether he avoids the Truth, as the Owl avoids the Light; or whether he rejoices in it, as the Lark which rises toward the Heaven with the appearance of the morning. For though Jews and Gentiles are incorporated together for the present, the immutable distinction between Good and Evil shall at length prevail over the temporary Naturalization of men in the Christian Society; an eternal separation shall take place; and they only who shall have put on Purity, Temperance, Resignation, and Patience, shall have their final Portion with the *Lamb of God*.

XXI. While we are aspiring to this moral use of

the brute Creation, it will be a grand reproach to us if we are unmindful of its natural use. Reason and Religion require, that the creatures of God, especially those appropriated to the service of man, should be treated with discretion and tenderness. The Mercy of God is *over all* his *works*: his Providence extends to brutes as well as to men: *he feedeth the young ravens that call upon him;* and even *the Lions*, roaring after their prey, *do seek their Meat from God.* All the creatures in the Earth, Air, and the Sea, wait upon his bounty, and *he giveth them their meat in due season.* The proper office of man therefore, as the Vicegerent of God in the government of the animal kingdom, is to imitate the goodness of God; to take delight in providing for the wants of such creatures as are dependent upon him, and in applying them, with moderation, mercy, and gratitude, to the uses appointed by the wisdom of our common Creator. Kings, who rule over men, are ordained ministers of good to those who are committed to their charge. The safety of the people is the supreme law of their conduct; and no divine authority will give a sanction to the wanton destruction, or even the unnecessary oppression of their subjects. In like manner, God hath made man the Lord of inferior creatures, but not their Tyrant. There are many ways of abusing them; but to insist upon these at large, would be quite foreign to the nature of this disquisition. The practice of dissecting animals alive to satisfy an unprofitable curiosity, is horrible to reflect upon. Indignation must be excited in any benevolent mind, when it presents to itself an helpless dog, stretched upon a table, crying and fainting under the knife of a philosophical butcher, who affects to enlighten the world with his wonderful discoveries: as if science were like to re-

ceive some elegant improvements from a man who has no feeling.

It is a consideration not less offensive, and, I fear, we have much to answer for upon this account, that horses, which contribute so much to our health, comfort, and convenience, should be hurried out of their lives, with galled breasts and battered knees, to save the precious time of impatient people, some of whom never employed any moments of their life to the glory of God or the good of their country. This is now become a national offence: and though the devotees to pleasure, together with the drudges of Mammon, may be too much in haste to listen to the voice of a speculative Monitor: yet certainly God, who hath lent his creatures to us, will not think it beneath his notice to enquire how they have been treated.

Cruelty to dumb animals is one of the distinguishing vices of the lowest and basest of the people. Wherever it is found, it is a certain mark of ignorance and meanness; an intrinsic mark, which all the external advantages of wealth, splendor, and nobility cannot obliterate. It will consist neither with true learning nor true civility; and Religion disclaims and detests it as an insult upon the majesty and the goodness of God; who, having made the instincts of brute beasts minister to the improvement of the mind as well as to the convenience of the body, hath furnished us with a motive to mercy and compassion toward them very strong and powerful, but too refined to have any influence on the illiterate or irreligious.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS.

1. To shew that I am not singular in ascribing a moral signification to the corporeal marks by which the clean animals were distinguished, I have referred to some ancient writers, as their sense is exhibited by *Pierius* in his *Hieroglyphics*, See p. 117, of the foregoing Disquisition. But it is not necessary to go so far backward. I have followed, without knowing it, the sense of a modern divine; whose compositions shew him to have been one of the best writers this Church can boast of; I mean Dr. *Young*, Father to the celebrated author of the *Night Thoughts*. In his Sermon called, *the Holy Contemplative*, we find these words: "Among the ceremonial Laws of Moses "(whereof the allegorical was the most proper and "principal interpretation, and according to which "sense they were chiefly to be observed) this was "one—that no beast should be accounted clean, but "such as had these two qualities, *cleaving of the hoof*, "and *chewing of the cud*. And these two qualities "in the beast were only symbols of these two acts in "men, which I am now treating of. Dividing the "hoof was a symbol of the act of discerning between "good and evil, that is contemplative knowledge: "and chewing the Cud was symbolical of the act of "applying what we know to practice; and both "these are necessary to make a man clean." *Young's* Sermons, vol. ii. p. 178, 179.

II. At p. 121, some notice is taken of the impure sacrifices of the heathens, and particularly of their horrible practice of offering human victims, which is confirmed by a passage or two in the margin. The ανθρωποθυσια and τεκνοθυσια of the heathens have been treated more at large by a very able hand, Mr. *Bryant*, in his *Observations and Enquiry relating to ancient History*, which every learned Reader, who is fond of such researches, will consult with pleasure and advantage; the author having discovered a more than ordinary degree of skill in Biblical as well as Grecian Antiquity, together with great judgment and ingenuity in the application of Etymological Criticism. He has shewn by a multitude of authorities, that human victims were offered to the heathen Deities, in *Egypt, Arabia,* all the states of *Greece, Italy, Germany* and *Gaul, Iceland, Africa,* and *America.* In a word, that where Idolatry prevailed, it was ever attended with this unmerciful superstition of shedding human blood, with every possible circumstance of barbarity. The whole account taken together affords us a frightful picture of the abominations of Paganism, and is even a disgrace to human nature: for it does not appear that the practice was ever censured to purpose by any of the heathens, till the previous publication of the Gospel had occasioned some of the more learned and rational among them to alter their tone; the Christians in their writings and discourses having severely exposed the impurity, absurdity, and cruelty of the heathen Superstition.

From what original this general practice of offering human victims could be derived, is a question of importance. Mr. *Bryant* deduces it from a tradition common to the most remote antiquity, which in process of time was miserably depraved: and his curious

observations on the *Mystical Sacrifice* of the Phœnicians render it more than probable. See p. 286. For this, and other offerings like to it, under the names of φαρμακοι and καθαρματα, were not devoted upon any apparent principle of cruelty, as might be supposed when captives taken in war were butchered before an Idol; but for the purposes of expiation and atonement; to compensate for the offences of the people, to avert the anger of heaven, or invite its protection on occasion of any public danger or calamity.

III. In the *second Part* of the Disquisition (II—VII) it has been shewn, that clean and unclean animals are applied in the subsequent parts of the Scripture in such a manner as is agreeable to our sense of the Mosaic distinction. But it has been objected, that the Scripture seems not to be uniform in such an application. To which it must be replied, that as clean and unclean animals are not realities of good and evil, but only figures; nothing hinders, but that, like other figures, they should signify differently, when under some different acceptation: as the same object, according to every new direction of the Light that falls upon it, will project a different shadow.

My meaning will be best explained by some examples borrowed from the style of the holy Scripture. *Water*, as a medium of purification, is a fit image of the Spirit of Regeneration in baptism, which washes away Sin: but, in its capacity of overflowing bodies with its waves, it becomes a figure of affliction, destruction, and even death itself. The same water which bore up the ark of *Noah* in safety, and exhibited a pattern of the Salvation of the Christian Church, destroyed the world of the ungodly. The Light of the Sun is beneficial to the whole creation,

and is emblematic of that divine light of life, which enlightens every man that cometh into the world: but the parching heat of its rays is used in the parables of Christ to express the fiery trial of persecution and tribulation for the Truth's sake.

With the same variety of allusion, and without any danger of impropriety or confusion in the language of the Scripture, the *Lion*, considered as an hungry and blood-thirsty beast of Prey, is an image of the *Devil*, who *as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour*. But in regard to his Strength, Power, Generosity, and the majesty of his countenance, he is highly expressive of the Regal Character, and is therefore assumed to denote the Power and Majesty of *Christ* himself, the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*, Rev. v. 5. *David*, in his Elegy on the death of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, recounts it as an honour to them in their capacity of warriors, that *they were swifter than* Eagles, *they were stronger than* Lions: and the allusion cannot be thought to interfere with the Levitical distinction; for eagles and lions are not separated from the clean animals for their strength or their swiftness abstractedly considered, but for the ferocity which applies these excellent properties indiscriminately to the purposes of contention, rapine, and bloodshed. The dog is an unclean animal with many unclean properties; but for his vigilance *, fidelity, and sagacity, he surpasses all other creatures, and becomes a proper assistant to the shepherd; in which capacity the Prophet *Isaiah*, chap lvi. 10. alludes to him as an example to the ministers of God's word, whose office it is to guard the flock from the

* —*Nunquam, custodibus illis,*
Nocturnum stabulis furem, incursusque luporum,
Aut impacatos a tergo horrebis Iberos. Virg.

incursions of the wolf: for they who give no warning of the enemies of the Church are reproached as *dumb dogs that cannot bark;* a name which in modern times has been accommodated by men of heat and zeal to what Bishop *Latimer* calls *unpreaching Prelates.*

The instance, which of all others seems most opposite to the established order of the Animals in the Law, is that representation of the *blessed* and the *cursed* at the day of judgment in *Matt.* xxv. 32, &c. under the figures of *Sheep* and *Goats.* But the difficulty of this similitude is removed by the manner in which it is introduced. It does not proceed on the ground of any specific differences between Sheep and Goats, (though the sheep in respect of its colour, and its good qualities will be allowed the preference) but on the act of *separating* one party from the other —*he shall* separate *them one from another, as a* Shepherd *divideth the sheep from the Goats.* If this grand division is illustrated by the act of a *Shepherd,* no division under the direction of a Shepherd can be agreeable to nature, but of such cattle as are committed to the charge of a Shepherd. If Wolves or Swine had been assumed instead of Goats, the contrast between the animals might have appeared more striking, but the act of separating them could not have been attributed to a Shepherd; by whose Office *Christ* was pleased on many occasions to signify his own as the Saviour, Judge, and Ruler of his people.

IV. In my reflections on the learning of the *Egyptians,* at p. 153. I have followed the general opinion in supposing them to have practised *three* different sorts of writing, and have given the account in the words of *Maximus.* But this matter having been

considered more attentively by a learned friend, for whose judgment and erudition I have the highest respect, I shall offer his sentiments to the Reader in his own words. "You have a quotation from *Maximus's* "Preface to *Horapollo*, to shew there were three "sorts of writing among the *Egyptians*. Above "twenty years ago I had a particular occasion to "search into the truth of this assertion, and could "find no grounds for it, though it is asserted by "*Diodorus Siculus*, Lib. iii. and by *Clemens Alex-* "*andrinus*, Lib. v. p. 555. Edit. Paris. 1629. The "Inscriptions on the Tables of Isis, the Obelisks, "and the breasts of the Mommies, are all in Hiero- "glyphics, and we have no footsteps of any other "sort of writing, till after the times of *Alexander* "*the Great*, when the Greek Alphabet was first in- "troduced under the *Ptolemies*, from whence it is "supposed the Coptic took its rise. I know not the "age of *Maximus*, but should think him to be far "later than *Diodorus Siculus*, who is himself by no "means ancient enough to attest a fact at least 500 "years older than himself, without some concurrent "evidence. There is not the least scrap of any hie- "ratic writing remaining in any old Author. The "inscriptions on the Obelisks given us by *Tacitus* "(Annal. l. ii. p. 42. edit. fol. Basil. 1519.) and by "*Ammianus Marcellinus* (l. xvii. p. 145. edit. Gryph. "1552.) shew the Hieroglyphic to have been the "common Character of the country before they had "an Alphabet; for it is not likely they would have "chosen to have locked up the praises of a vain glo- "rious King in Mystic figures known only to a few, "when the visible design of those very magnificent "monuments was to display the honour of their "Kings and the Glory of their Country. *Marcel-*

" *linus* judiciously calls these symbolic figures the *be-*
" *ginning of knowledge. Formarum autem innumeras*
" *notas, Hieroglyphicas appellatas, quas ei undique vi-*
" *demus, incisas* initialis sapientiæ *vetus insignivit au-*
" *toritas.* We have no good authority to introduce
" another sort of writing among the Egyptians but
" the *Hieroglyphic* and the Greek. Had there been
" a third, certainly some footsteps would have re-
" mained besides the *ipse dixit* of *Diodorus,* from
" whom it is probable *Clemens* and *Maximus* bor-
" rowed it."

Maximus is a modern *Greek* writer. He calls himself bishop of *Cythera,* an island between *Candy* and the *Morea,* now called *Cerigo.* There is a second Letter from him addressed to the person of *Hoeschelius* the Editor of *Horapollo,* and it is dated, as his Preface is, in the year 1595. His account is therefore of no value, but for the remarks intermixt with it.

V. My subject led me naturally at p. 159, to reflect on the moral use of the Animals in the Fables of *Æsop:* and that again hath since led me to enquire after the original of those fables. But the dissention among authors is so great concerning this matter, that nothing certain can be determined. *Quintilian* ascribes them to *Hesiod* as the *first author; Phædrus* speaks of *Æsopus Auctor.* As to the conjecture of *Sale,* translator of the *Koran,* and *Bayle,* that they are to be ascribed to *Lokman,* an eastern fabulist, and that there was no such person as *Æsop,* it is of little credit. *Fabricius* in his *Bibliotheca Græca,* an author of good repute, does indeed express a doubt whether the Fables under the name of *Æsop* were written by him. Upon the whole it seems most probable, that *Planudes* was the compiler, and that the Collection is miscellaneous, the greater part of them having *Æsop* for

their author. The matter of them shews that they were not all of the same age or country. The fable of the *Fox and the Grapes* must be Oriental, because it is not known that any *European* foxes eat grapes; though it hath always been observed of the foxes of *Palestine*. Having occasion lately to mention this circumstance, I was informed on the authority of a gentleman of Observation, who has spent some years abroad, that the dogs in the *Madeiras* are all confined under a very severe penalty upon the owners during the season when the vineyards are in fruit, because they devour the grapes: which is, to me at least, a new article of Natural History.

VI. I ought to make some Apology for having derived the name of *Nimrod*, p. 128, from נמר a word which signifies *a Leopard*. The learned Mr. *Bryant*, in some part of his work, supposes it to come from מרד *to rebel;* and another Gentleman, who has a critical knowledge of the Hebrew, has objected to my Etymology, being of the same opinion with Mr. *Bryant*. I must confess also that the Lexicons are against me. What I have to answer is this; that the word, if interpreted *a rebel*, is not grammatical: it should then have been מורד or מריד. If it is taken in the sense I plead for, it must be deemed a *quadriliteral* word, and as such compounded of a double radix. If the latter root begins with the consonant which terminates the first root, it is the custom of the language to drop one of them, and leave four letters instead of five. By this rule, the two roots are נמר *a leopard*, and רדה or רד *to domineer:* of which senses both are equally pertinent when applied to the Character of *Nimrod*.

A

DISSERTATION

ON THE

OFFERING UP OF ISAAC

BY

ABRAHAM.

A

DISSERTATION,

&c.

1. The command of God, and the assent of *Abraham*, with respect to the offering up of *Isaac*, are things not very easy to be reconciled with our notions of wisdom and rectitude, if the differences and mistakes of learned men concerning any particular question are proofs of its obscurity. The whole affair, considered in itself, is indeed not very easy to be understood, and hath but an unpromising aspect. Yet it happens sometimes, that where the earth has a barren appearance at the surface, and is deformed with naked rocks, and frightful precipices, it is rich underneath with veins of precious ore. The traveller, who passes carelessly over the face of such a country, will perhaps see nothing but what is ungrateful to the sight: but the more patient miner, whose profession it is to search for hidden treasure, becomes acquainted with its value. However, as no person engaged in such a difficult employment can prosecute his work in subterraneous darkness, he takes a light down with him in his hand to direct him. And if we are desirous of working to any good effect upon the matter before us, we must use a light proper to the occasion; which is that of Revelation itself. We

examine every subject by the principles and data of that science to which it properly belongs. No reasonable man finds himself lessening in his own opinion, because he views natural objects by the rays of the sun, which God hath appointed for that purpose. By parity of reason, he that would rightly distinguish superior things, must be content to examine them by a superior light. And the judgment he forms under such circumstances will be the judgment of reason. For what is reason, but that faculty in the mind, which determines the fitness or unfitness of any thing, by considering it in a rational manner, with its own peculiar dependences and relations?

II. Yet some have supposed (as we may infer from their proceedings) that the thing they call Reason requires just the contrary: that the subjects of the Bible ought to be severed from the Bible in which they are found, and held up to be examined by a light foreign to themselves in the human understanding. But this method must be very fallacious. For if the light of the mind leads to contrary determinations in different persons, as it is found to do on very many occasions, its existence as a natural light will at least become doubtful. When different persons view the same object by day-light, they all agree as to its figure, magnitude, distance, colour, and other external properties. And it would be wonderful if they were to disagree, when they all view it through the same common medium, and with a like organ of vision. But if we try the same persons at intellectual or spiritual objects, they will differ so widely as to demonstrate that the two cases are not parallel; that they do not view these objects by the same light, nor with the same instrument. Some receive what others reject; some admire what others abhor; and some

believe what others deny. But this diversity could never happen, amongst people as yet in their senses, if the colours of good and evil were self-evident, as the colours of material objects: that is, if the optics of the mind were as naturally prepared to judge, as the eye is to see; and there were any light naturally present, and common to all understandings.

III. There will be great convenience in condescending to take this matter as it really is. We shall then be no longer distressed with endeavouring to support an imaginary dignity; which if we are not qualified to support, we shall only sink the lower into intellectual poverty by attempting it.

The human mind is a mirror, which, like other mirrors, has no light inherent in itself, but reflects images as they are illuminated by an exterior medium. It doth not make the images it reflects, but returns such as are already made, and is rather receptive than productive. Nature will undoubtedly occasion some diversity in the qualities of the metal; yet it borrows its figure and its polish from education. If its figure is false, or its polish imperfect, it will represent that as obscure, distorted, and monstrous, which in itself is bright, regular, and beautiful. And, on the other hand, it will give beauty and regularity, to a disorderly confused object, whose lineaments are accommodated to the extravagances of its own surface. Hence it hath come to pass, that different minds have made so many contradictory reflections about the same thing. What the Christian understood as a grand example of the wisdom and power of God, was to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness. The Christian examined it by the principles of Revelation, and therefore he was persuaded of it, and embraced it. But the Jew was

taught by the traditions of his Church, to trust in the outward ceremonies of the Law for justification, and to expect temporal honours as the best gifts of God to his chosen people. The Greek was full of rhetoric, stoical pride, and philosophic novelty; ready to reject every thing as mean and trifling, if unattended with the ornaments of speech, and the pomp of science. How was it possible for minds, so differently prepared, to agree in their opinion about any matter of importance, wherein the various principles of each were nearly interested? The Jew was earthly and stupid, and looked *into* nothing; the Greek was proud and affected, and looked *above* every thing: and so neither of them had any relish for the revealed wisdom of God. Foolishness in the form of superstition possessed the one; and as great foolishness in the form of pedantry blinded the other.

No discoveries can be made in the Scripture, till we have put away the prejudices both of the Jew and the Greek; that so we may be at liberty to examine a subject of the Scripture, with the help of such information as the Scripture itself will afford us. And I hope what I have said, though seemingly foreign to my subject, will be accepted as a sufficient apology for what some may account a low and vulgar method of investigation: such a method, however, as I wish to follow on every occasion that requires it, as I am persuaded the present doth in a particular manner.

IV. The command of God to Abraham, in relation to the offering of his son Isaac, occurs in the twenty-second chapter of Genesis, and is thus worded: *Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the Land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering, upon one of the mountains which I*

will tell thee of. Every circumstance is here comprehended, which can heighten the severity of this command on the part of God, together with the hardship and sorrow that must attend a compliance with it on the part of Abraham: and the more attentively we consider this trial, the harder it will appear.

The case was this: God had appeared to Abraham under the Oaks of Mamre, and, with all the solemnity of a divine exhibition, had assured him that Sarah, who till that time had been barren, and was now very far advanced in years, should bring forth a son. In this son, all the nations of the Earth were to be blessed: his posterity was to be as innumerable as the stars of Heaven, and as the sand upon the seashore: which promise, according to St. Paul's application of it, was originally so expressed, as to include the person of the expected Messiah, that promised *seed,* who in the latter days was actually born of the family of Abraham.

The circumstance on which all these great things depended, did accordingly come to pass. Sarah brought forth her son Isaac, who grew up towards manhood, while his parents were happy under a persuasion, that in him all the promises of God would in due time be accomplished.

Things being thus disposed, the *Angel of the Lord* appears to Abraham, and commands him to *offer his son for a burnt offering:* an action shocking in itself, and apparently much worse in its consequences. For the promise of a blessing, as wide as the whole world, depended on the life of Isaac; and if we suppose him changed into a burnt offering, how is the truth of God to be justified? How is the Messiah to be born? How is the world to be redeemed? These are queries

which obtrude themselves with some clamour, and are very hard to be answered.

But let us not be discouraged. The subject will soon wear a better face: for if we view this transaction, with its motives, circumstances, issues, and prophetical signatures, (all of which must be taken into the account) we shall not only see the truth and justice of God acquitted, but shall understand the whole as an additional argument of the divine wisdom and mercy. In the prosecution of this enquiry, our first step must be to ask, with what design God commanded Abraham to offer up his son?

V. After the flood, the Church and the true religion were continued in the family of *Shem:* for in the other sons of Noah, particularly in *Ham,* the same principles of infidelity which had corrupted the old world, began to work afresh in the new: so that at the expiration of the first century after the flood (if we take the naming of *Peleg* as a memorial of the transaction) a scheme of apostacy was set on foot at *Babel,* or, as the Greek version calls it, *Babylon.* That there was a change in religion at the time of the dispersion from *Babel* is highly probable on all accounts; and the Scripture seems to contain some evident marks of such an event. The denomination of the *children of Heber,* or *Hebrews,* as distinguishing the true believers from the Gentiles, and which took place at this time, is one mark of it. A second is the character we have of *Babylon* in the Revelation of St. *John;* for it could not properly be assumed to denote a *mother* of religious *abominations* in the *mystical* sense, unless itself had originally been such in the literal. A third, and a plainer mark than either of the foregoing, is the fact, that from this time we

cannot with certainty find any religion amongst the descendants of *Ham* and *Japheth*, but that of idolatry.

From the time of the dispersion at *Babel*, two parts of the world out of three were gone off to heathenism: and as falsehood is more alluring than truth, and generally more successful in its zeal, through the corruption it has to work upon, idolatry would soon gather many proselytes from the posterity of *Heber*. Such was the rapidity of its progress, that in less than three hundred years from the flood, the Progenitors of *Abraham* were infected with this growing evil, and are said to have *served other Gods* *.

The divine mercy therefore, having regard to the succeeding generations, judged it necessary to separate from the world some one individual of the *children of Heber*, for the preservation of the faith and the practice of true religion; both of which were now like to be extirpated by the prevailing influence of idolatry.

VI. Abraham was the person selected of God for this purpose. He was called to be the father of the church of the Hebrews, and of that promised seed which was to *bruise the head of the Serpent*. But as faith and righteousness are the marks which have always distinguished the members of the church from the children of this world, it was expedient that the person, so called of God, should be eminent as an example of both to all his posterity. With this view divine providence was training him up, under the severe discipline of a long and solemn probation. For though he is able to search the heart, and read all the secrets of it, he requires nevertheless, that the inward state of the mind should always be made manifest

* Josh. xxiv. 2.

by some outward acts, for the perfecting of his saints, and for an example to those who come after. Abraham is supposed to have *believed* in the true God from the beginning: and faith is an excellent virtue, without which no other virtue can stand, and upon which every other may be built. Yet the only acceptable faith, is that which *worketh by love*. Some men may think well; some may speak well; and others may both think and speak as their duty requires: yet they may easily fail when their thoughts and their words are to be reduced to action. This is the surest trial of their sincerity: and if the heart of man may so far impose upon itself as to think its attainments higher than they are, some *fact* is necessary to convince it of its mistake, and thereby lead it forward to greater degrees of perfection.

VII. On this consideration, as well as on some others, it was necessary that the facts of Abraham's life should agree with the profession of his understanding: and indeed all professions are vain so long as they want this seal of perfection. Therefore he was commanded to *get out from* his *country, and from* his *kindred*, and from *his father's house, unto a land* which God would *shew unto him* *. The *land* was not pointed out to him by name, that it might be an object of faith, not of knowledge. For they who are inclined to follow God no farther than their own knowledge will give them assurance about the way, neither know themselves, nor the nature of obedience, nor the majesty of that Being by whom they are called: and however great they may appear in their own estimation, they are too little for his purposes. The holy Patriarch was of another disposition. He

* Gen. xii. 1.

obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went *. His obedience being regulated by a principle of *faith*, he resigned himself up to the disposal of God, without knowing how he was to be disposed of. Reason and faith, though different in themselves, are by no means inconsistent; because it is every way fit and rational for any creature to give itself up absolutely to the direction of its Creator. Reason, without faith, will stand questioning; and unless it can first be satisfied as to the ends and issues of things, and reconcile the means with its own preconceptions, it will refuse to be directed. But here to Abraham neither the end nor the means were fully opened. The command of God was proposed for his obedience; and he knowing it to be impossible for the will of a Being infinitely perfect to have any end but a good one in view, or to pursue by insufficient means, assented to the will of God, and followed it, without thinking it necessary for him to foresee the whole series of its operations. He was content, if it should so please God, to spend his whole life upon earth in a state of suspense and dependence, and to live upon expectation.

VIII. The land to which he was called, proved at length to be the land of Canaan; a land promised to himself, and to *his seed* after him, *when as yet he had no child* †. Here he *sojourned*,, as a passenger in a strange country. He had reached the expected land; yet found it no seat of enjoyment, but only a new station, from whence his faith might still look forward: for not long after his arrival, *a famine* ‡ rendered it uninhabitable, and he was obliged to remove for a season into Egypt. The traveller, who is pass-

* Heb. xi. 8. † Acts vii. 5. ‡ Gen. xii. 10.

ing through an unknown road, may imagine that the summit of the next hill will present to his sight the end and object of his journey; but when he has reached it, he finds it succeeded by another, much more remote, and must wait with patience for a better prospect.

That Canaan itself was offered to Abraham only as a stage in the way of his pilgrimage, and that he accepted it in no other capacity, is clear from his manner of using it. He founded no city there; he built no towering capitol; he raised no fortifications: but *builded an altar unto the Lord who had appeared unto him* *, and dwelled in *tabernacles* †, or moveable tents; not assuming the form of the prince or the soldier, but of the shepherd and the pilgrim; of one who had no fixed habitation in this world, but was a *stranger upon earth*, waiting for an heavenly inheritance, a true Canaan, a land worth enjoying with *a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God* ‡.

IX. The degenerate children of Abraham, with whom St. *Stephen* argued in his apology, were urged with the example of their great forefather; the nature of whose tenure was displayed so clearly, and insisted upon so eloquently from the words of their Law; that when they compared their own sordid sentiments with the holiness and sublimity of his profession, as the discourse of St. *Stephen* in a manner forced them to do, they were not able to endure the contrast. They had fixed their hearts upon their *place and nation*, as they called it. Their country, their temple, and a deliverance from Roman tax-gatherers, were the important objects of their devotion.

* Gen. xii. 7. † Heb. xi. 9. ‡ Ibid. xi. 10.

But the Martyr shewed them, they could find no precedent for such an attachment in the calling and conduct of their father Abraham; that even the consummation of the promise to his posterity, so far as it related to this present world, did never signify a state of possession and enjoyment, but only an opportunity of *serving God* with freedom and security, in a land remote from their enemies and oppressors; that after all the excellent things spoken of Canaan, it was but a *strange* land to the heirs of Abraham's faith. What Egypt was with respect to Canaan, a land of servitude and exile, such was Canaan itself compared with the *heavenly* country they had in view.

X. In the intermediate ages, the patriarchal example was adopted by the *Rechabites* *, a family in Israel, which distinguished itself by a conformity to the life of Abraham. To the circumstances of *dwelling in tents*, and having neither vineyards, fields, nor possessions of any kind, they added a religious abstinence from *wine;* aspiring to the holiness of the *Nazarites*, and to that purity which afterwards appeared in the abstracted character of John the Baptist. To those who have renounced this world, nothing remains but the world to come: whence it may be inferred that they who were so like to the holy Patriarch in their practice, and had his example to direct them, could not be unlike him in their principle: but from this principle the modern Jews had departed so far, that they had even lost the sight of it.

XI. In the succeeding intercourse of God with Abraham, the same method is still observed, of proving his fidelity by some experiment upon his

* Jerem. xxxv. 6, 7.

Faith. Therefore the promise of *Isaac's* birth was deferred, till the prediction should have nothing to support it, but the power and veracity of God. A Son might have been granted at the natural time of life, and have answered all the purposes of the promise: a child from a man *as good as dead*, and from a woman who had always been *barren*, and was now *ninety years of age*, would better answer the purpose of God with respect to Abraham himself. *This is the word of promise*, saith the Apostle, *at this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son* *: at a *time*, when the blessing could not be expected in the common course of nature; and when that wisdom, which partaketh more of earth than of heaven, would have rejected the expectation of it as groundless and irrational. But Abraham *staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief*. What though a child from such parents was like life from death? as a lily or rose springing out of frost and snow? It was therefore both a proper and a probable gift from that *God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were* †.

XII. The first object of our enquiry, was the *design* with which God commanded Abraham to offer up his Son: and this, I think, may now be inferred from what we have already seen: for all the other trials of the Patriarch were but preparatory to this. The design which was there begun, is here brought to its crisis and completion. On this occasion only, God is said to have *tempted* him, that is, to have tried and proved him to the uttermost: because this occasion differs from the other, as the fire of the Refiner differs from the Touchstone: and unless the

* Rom. ix. 9. † See Rom. iv. 17, &c.

metal is first made to discover its royal nature by some slighter experiments, no good can be expected from casting it into the furnace.

XIII. The matter of this *Temptation* divides itself into two parts: 1. The act of offering Isaac; and 2. The loss of the promises, which seemed to be the necessary consequence. In the act itself there was a concurrence of every circumstance that could add to the weight of it. For in the first place, the birth of Isaac at a season so unexpected would engage the affection as much as it exercised the faith of his parents. I speak not of that partiality which is natural in parents towards the children of their later years; because that consideration was superseded by another of much higher importance: for Isaac was more properly a child of grace than of nature; to whom those words of *Eve* might well be applied—*I have gotten a man from the Lord.*

But he was likewise an only son—*take now thy son, thine* only *son Isaac.* Abraham had no other to be the companion of his age. We see Jacob afterwards in the deepest affliction with the apprehension of losing *Benjamin,* though he had many other sons. When his brethren required him to go with them to Egypt, *My son,* said he, *shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead and he is left alone. If mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.* Every tender reader, especially if he is a parent, suffers with Jacob, and feels the weight of his fears and sorrows. What *searchings of heart* then must Abraham have experienced, when this act of obedience was first proposed to him! Natural affection, where an only child is the object of it, is a principle which sometimes operates so powerfully as to get the better of every

other: and that it operated in Abraham as in other men, is clear enough from the words of the Scripture —*take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest.* He was probably grown up to that state, when a son is not only an amusement to a father, but a comfort and support, a friend and companion. Some of the Jewish Doctors suppose him to have been at this time thirteen years of age; but *Josephus**, perhaps with better authority, five and twenty. Such a son, arrived at years of discretion, must have endeared himself by many acts of duty and affection. His submission on this occasion, and the piety of his riper years, give us reason enough to conclude, that his life had been a course of unreserved obedience.

This is the son which Abraham was called upon to resign: and how? not in the common way of nature, but by a violent death, as the Lamb is carried to the slaughter: and, lest any circumstance of sorrow should be wanting, the Father himself was the priest appointed to offer this victim. For three days, that is, during his journey to the place appointed, his mind was agitated with the force of the divine precept on one side, and natural affection on the other. The temptation seems to have been purposely protracted by the length of the way, and the ascent of an high mountain, that there might be space enough for faith and affection, the fear of God and the love of the world, the expectation of things future, and the desire of things present; for all the passions of grace and nature to exert their utmost efforts.

XIV. If it should here be asked, how we can re-

* Joseph. Lib. II. c. xxii. It is no objection to this that Isaac is called *a lad;* for *Ishmael* is so called at sixteen years or upwards, and *Benjamin* after he was married. Compare Gen. xliv. 30, and xlvi. 21.

concile this command with the *nature of God?* I must confess I know not, unless we take the *nature of man* also into the question. By the act of man's disobedience, the whole world fell into a state of forfeiture; or, as the apostle hath expressed it, *death passed upon all:* and though the goodness of God, having provided a ransom, did on that consideration release the world from the extreme effects of his justice; yet an acknowledgment of this universal condemnation was required from the time that sacrifices were instituted. The law of Moses was declaratory of a right which had subsisted from the beginning, when *Abel* brought of the *firstlings* of his flock*. For the first-born of *men*, a pecuniary redemption of five shekels was accepted: the first-born of clean beasts were to be offered by fire, and their blood sprinkled upon the altar: the first-born of the unclean were to be redeemed by a price, as being unfit for consecration. The first-born of Egypt were taken in kind; their redemption being precluded by their unbelief.

Therefore if *every* first-born was the Lord's by right, *Isaac* was so: and if a commutation was an indulgence, the rigour of the law might be observed without any breach of Justice; especially by Him, who, for the salvation of the world, permitted this institution to take place against his *beloved* and *only begotten Son;* who having superseded the oblation of the first-born of beasts, and offered a price more valuable than Silver and Gold, to redeem the first-born of men, is himself become *the first-born of every creature:* he hath redeemed all, and taken the place of all, by a substitution of himself. This is what occurs, when we consider the nature of God, and the

* Gen. iv. 4.

nature of his command, without any regard to its issue: for there is a difficulty in the precept, which vanishes in the performance, and renders these reflections unnecessary.

XV. But now, if we return to Abraham, we shall find another difficulty: for how afflicting soever the death of his son may appear to us, it was to him but the smaller part of the trial. In this son the promises of God were to be accomplished; all the nations of the earth were to be blessed in him; the Saviour of the world was to be born of his race: so that upon his life the future redemption of mankind depended, and the universal blessing of a resurrection from the dead. All these things were to proceed from Isaac, the only son of Abraham, and the veracity of God was pledged to see them all fulfilled. The knot which is to be untied is now before us. For how could Isaac be put to death, without falsifying the word of God by cutting off the possibility of fulfilling his promise? Nothing need be added to increase the perplexity of this matter: the contradiction is plain and striking, and seems to be insurmountable. Yet faith, which can level all things, found a way of removing the difficulty: and thus it reasoned—that if God had given a promise, it was utterly incredible that he should retract it—that nothing was *too hard for the Lord*, as experience had already shewed—that *what he had promised he was able also to perform*—that therefore, whatever the present appearances might threaten, Isaac should still be the source of the promised blessing, and the divine veracity should be preserved inviolate, though he were sacrificed upon the altar. But how could this possibly be, without his resurrection from the dead? No other method was left: and faith being reduced to this

strait, believed the doctrine and solved the difficulty. God had not so far revealed himself to Abraham, as to give him reason to think this would be the result, neither indeed was it so intended; but his own faith led him up to it. "That God may be true, (said he) *that* shall be, which never yet hath been: a man, even Isaac, now going to be offered, shall be raised up to life: the God who at his birth gave him Being from parents dead in age, shall now fulfil his promise by restoring him from Death itself." That he reasoned with himself and concluded to this effect, appears both from the testimony of St. Paul, and from the terms of the history in the book of Genesis. *By faith*, says the Apostle, *Abraham when he was* tried *offered up Isaac: and he that had* received the promises, *offered up his* only begotten son, *of whom it was said that in* Isaac *shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to* RAISE *him up even from the* DEAD *. The history itself, in the book of Genesis, informs us, that when he was within sight of the place where his son was to be offered, he said to his young men "Abide you here—and I and the lad will go yonder, and worship, and come again to you." But supposing him to have been offered for a burnt-offering, as his father then believed he would be, how could it be said they would *come again*, unless he was persuaded of Isaac's resurrection? It would be unnatural to take this expression as an evasion, and to imagine that the holy Patriarch could condescend to trifle with his servants, when his soul was in travail with such an affair as this; therefore, I am inclined to think, he expected the resurrection of his son, not as a distant, but as an immediate blessing.

* Heb. xi. 17.

XVI. Under this persuasion, though surely not without some fluctuation of thought, some share of those tumultuous emotions of the mind, which are inseparable from the condition of humanity, he ascended the mountain, laid his son upon the altar, and stretched forth his hand to slay him: but in that instant, the angel of the Lord called to him and said, *Lay not thine hand upon the lad—for now I know that thou fearest God*—It never was the design of God that he should be put to death: but it was expedient that Abraham should think so, that it might appear whether his virtue could endure so severe a trial; and now, the end was answered. The inquisition having been kept up with rigour, and the justice of God being satisfied with the absolute resignation of his servant, now made *perfect through sufferings;* Mercy takes up the cause, and accepts the purpose instead of the performance.

At the same time, it was so ordered by the providence of God, that *a ram was caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of his son.* Thus it came to pass, that a real sacrifice was offered; while Isaac, the intended one, was raised from the altar, as a person received from the dead. St. *Paul* instructs us to understand his deliverance as a figurative resurrection, a prelude to the resurrection of *Jesus Christ. Abraham,* he saith, *accounted that God was able to raise him up even from the dead;* and then adds, *from whence also he received him in a figure**; εν παραβολη, in *a parable,* where the things *spoken of* are descriptive of things *understood.* The person of Isaac, his impending death, and unexpected deliverance, are

* Heb. xi. 19.

the things spoken of: the person of Christ, his actual sacrifice, and his resurrection which followed, are the things understood. It will readily be admitted, that the resurrection of Isaac was *parabolic*, or descriptive of something beyond itself, if it should appear, that all the other lines of his character point as directly to the Messiah, as the rays of a circle to its center: and our labour will not be lost, if we review it with this intention.

XVII. In the appellation, *seed of Abraham*, there is an ambiguity, which implies a similitude between *Isaac* the immediate, and *Christ* the more remote *son of Abraham*. If we apply the expression to an individual, who can be understood by it but Isaac? yet the apostle applies it to the person of the Messiah; affirming, that the covenant with Abraham and *his seed*, was the *covenant confirmed of God in Christ* *, and that Christ himself was the seed intended in the terms of the promise.

The birth both of the one and the other was announced by an immediate Revelation from Heaven, and was in either case above the laws of nature: so that when *Sarah* was forewarned of Isaac's birth, and *Mary* of the birth of Christ, the thing appeared incredible to both, and occasioned a similar expostulation. *Sarah* said, *Shall I of a surety bear a child which am old?* And the blessed Virgin in her turn said, *How can this be, seeing I know not a man?* Isaac was the *only* and *beloved son* of Abraham, as Christ was the only and beloved Son of God. Isaac was mocked by *Ishmael*, the spurious offspring of Abraham; Christ and the Christians, his spiritual seed, were persecuted by the unbelieving Jews, his natural

* Gal. iii. 16, 17.

children; and the apostle hath ascertained the parallel, by arguing from one of these cases to the other —*cast out the bond-woman and her son*—that is, let *Jerusalem*, with her children the Jews, in bondage under the elements of the law, be cast out, like Hagar and her son, to the wide world, as unworthy of being admitted to the inheritance of the gospel. Thus far the character of Isaac was predictive or parabolical; and perhaps the relation might be farther pursued: but it will be better to confine our attention to the particular subject of our present enquiry.

XVIII. Isaac was sentenced to suffer by the hand of his father, who took the *fire* and *a knife* to slay him. And whence did the sufferings of Christ proceed, but from the Father, *who spared not his own Son*, but *delivered him up for us all* to the sword of justice and the fire of wrath; in which respects every burnt offering was a pledge and figure of his passion. But the history is yet more circumstantial—*Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son, and they went both of them together.* Under the same circumstances did Christ go out to the mountain on which he was to be sacrificed, bearing on his shoulders the wood of his own cross; to which he was afterwards fastened, as Isaac was *bound*, and *laid on the altar upon the wood.* Each of them submitted freely to the divine command: for Isaac was of an age to have withstood the persuasions of his father; and Christ, had he thought it good, might have called for more than twelve legions of angels to deliver him in the hour of darkness; nay, had he spoken the word, the heavens and the earth would have fled away like smoke before his face; but he became *obedient unto death*, even the death of the cross.

XIX. If we proceed with the parallel, we find the

one received from the dead *in a figure*, the other in reality. In the purpose of his father, Isaac was devoted and sacrificed: nay, an actual sacrifice was offered as Abraham had expected; but in the unexpected way of a substitution; and Isaac was alive, as one who had survived the fiery trial of the altar *. His father, in reflecting upon it, would naturally break forth into some expression, to the same effect with that of the father in the parable—*This my son was dead, and is alive again!*

With respect to the circumstances of *time* and *place*, the two transactions agree in a wonderful manner. For, it appears, that *Isaac* was thus received from the dead on the *third day*. The sacred history informs us (doubtless with some wise intention) that *on the third day* Abraham lift up his eyes, and saw afar off the place which God had appointed On that same day, he laid him upon the altar, and received him from it alive, after he had been as good as dead in the estimation of his father for three days, according to the time of Christ's resurrection. The *place* was on the mountains of Moriah; those very mountains, on one of which our Lord Jesus Christ was afterwards crucified. The city of Jerusalem was built upon them: on the highest, which in 2 Chron. ch. iii. is expressly called by the name of *Mount Moriah*, stood the holy Temple, in which the Lamb

* The author of The Divine Legation of Moses, vol. II. part ii. is of opinion, that by the offering of Isaac, Abraham was instructed in the final sacrifice of Christ; while the permitted one of the Ram informed him of the intermediate sacrifices of the Law. But this doth not appear, and may be thought too nice and refined an application of typical evidence. It seems more probable that the *Resurrection* of Jesus Christ was principally foreshewn in the person of Isaac, and his *bloody Death* in the permitted sacrifice of the Ram; so that by the conjunction of the two, the exhibition was complete.

Christ Jesus was figuratively offered for several hundred years in the daily sacrifices of the Law; and Calvary, on which he was at length offered in person, though without the city walls, was a part in the chain of the mountains of *Moriah*. The Patriarch foreseeing that the figurative offering and resurrection of his son, would one day be there realized in the death and resurrection of the Messiah, gave a name to the place in the spirit of prophecy, calling it *Jehovah jireh*, the *Lord will provide;* alluding to the words he had before used in answer to the expostulation of Isaac, " My son, God will *provide himself a lamb* for a burnt offering :" which though they were then words meant of Isaac himself, went over his head, and took place in the person of Christ. And the historian adds, that the place was thenceforward marked out for the observation of posterity by a proverbial tradition—*as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*—But here the English version differs from the original, and from almost every translation, commentator, and critic; who agree to render the words—*In this mountain the Lord shall provide;* that is, if we complete the sentence—Shall provide himself *that Lamb* for an offering, which shall *take away the sins of the world.*

XX. What I have farther to say upon the case is this: that if Abraham understood the scene we have been considering as an earnest and figure of the Messiah's death and resurrection, as he appears to have done by his own prophetical declaration; then the design of God in this whole affair needs no farther apology nor explanation. For now it is evident, that the hard task imposed upon Abraham, instead of defeating the promise of God, as it seemed about to do, did not only ensure it more effectually, but was made

also to exhibit the very manner in which it should be accomplished. Such are the ways of God! In the creation of the natural world, he brought light out of darkness; and in the œconomy of the spiritual, life out of death. Here also, out of a dark and severe precept, which seemed to promise nothing but a scene of disappointment and cruelty, he opened to the father of the faithful a lively prospect of his future mercy in the redemption of mankind. From the issue of this transaction in particular, Abraham *saw the day* of Christ, *and was glad.*

XXI. If we proceed to moralize upon this subject, it will occur to us in the first place, that the Ways of God are not like our ways: his purposes are brought to pass by such means, as seem to us the most unlikely of all others. While His eye is intent upon some future good, our prospect is bounded by the present evil out of which it is to arise: and the wisdom of the world is ready to deny the providence of God, if it cannot immediately reconcile its operations with its own prejudices and passions. If a moralist of the modern stamp had been in the place of Abraham, he must by his own rules have replied against God, and determined the precept unfit, unjust, and contrary to nature; for having no *faith,* he would have judged only according to what *appeared.* But if Abraham had judged thus, the event had been very different. Instead of being celebrated as the great example of faith and righteousness, the progenitor of the Messiah, and the *friend of God,* he would probably have lost his son some other way; would have been rejected as a person unfit for the blessings intended; and must have sought his comfort amongst the philosophers of Babel.

XXII. The wise son of Sirach, well acquainted

with the history of Abraham's probation, seems to have extracted from it this refined and excellent moral. "My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, pre-"pare thy soul for *temptation*. Set thy heart aright, "and constantly endure, and make not haste in time "of trouble. Cleave unto him and depart not away, "that thou mayest be increased at thy last end. For "*gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the fur-*"*nace of adversity*." Forewarned of this, no faithful disciple ought to be surprised, if some trial is found for him now, as for Abraham of old; neither let him wonder if the matter of it should be furnished by that treasure, whatever it may be, upon which his heart is most fixed. For the affections may be shaken off from the world most powerfully, by the instrumentality of that which hath the fastest hold upon them. If he is wise, he will learn to trust to God for an explanation of those things, which at present may seem irreconcileable, either with the goodness of his nature, or the wisdom of his providence.

XXIII. It is a lesson to which flesh and blood are strangely averse; yet on some principle or other it must be admitted, that nothing is to be set in competition with God. Isaac was to Abraham the greatest support and comfort of his life, the tenderest object of his affection. Power, honour, and pleasure had no allurements for him; he was content to live as a stranger upon earth, and to be exposed to perils and affronts in an idolatrous inhospitable country. Yet this blessing he was ready to give up, so far as God should require it, and in the manner he should command. His faith did indeed assure him of an happy consequence, when the course of the temptation should be finished. And thence all his children may learn, that it is impossible to be a loser by sub-

mitting to the commands of God. Abraham by venturing to lose his son saved him; and he that will venture, on a parallel occasion, to lose even his life in this world, shall save it to life eternal.

XXIV. In the mean time, let him consider for his comfort, that every instance of self-denial will be found by experience to be much lighter than it appears. There may be difficulty and terror in the precept which enjoins it, but it shall vanish in the performance, as it did with Abraham. There was indeed a loss of life; but how different, how far inferior to that which he had dreaded! After he had expected to see the blood of his only son streaming upon the altar, and the flames consuming the object of his affection; he at last saw a brute animal expiring in his stead. And while we are fearing that our peace, our comfort, our happiness, our life, must all be sacrificed in obedience to the divine precepts; their severity will at last fall only upon the brutal part of us: that which is most dear and valuable to us will be preserved; and that only will be lost, which is not worth saving. This part of the moral is so elegantly touched by St. *Bernard*, that I shall give it to the reader in his own words. "Tu igitur, "si vocem Domini audieris intus in animo, et di- "catur tibi, ut offeras Isaac, ut tuum quodcunque "est *gaudium* immoles Deo, (interpretatur enim "Isaac gaudium seu risus) fideliter et constanter "obedire ne timeas: securus esto: non Isaac sed "aries morietur: non peribit tibi *lætitia* sed *contu-* "*macia*——Hæc vita est sanctorum; tanquam tris- "tes, semper autem gaudentes; *tanquam morientes*, "*et ecce vivimus*."

AN

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

CIRCUMSTANCES AND MORAL INTENTION

OF THE

TEMPTATION OF JESUS CHRIST

IN THE WILDERNESS.

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OUR Saviour Christ came into this world to *destroy the works of the Devil:* and this he effected by a regular progress; not attempting to overcome the sharpness of death, till he had resisted the deceitfulness of sin: for death will have its effect, so long as sin retains its power. This was true of Christ; and it is true of all other men: whence it must appear to every considerate Christian, how greatly we are interested in the History of Christ's Temptation. He is said to have been *tempted in all points like as we are*—κατα παντα καθ' ομοιοτητα *——or, "in all respects "according to the similitude of our nature and cir- "cumstances;" that is, with the same passions and appetites to be exercised, and with like matter administered to them by the Tempter.

The utility therefore of a subject, which hath so near a relation to ourselves, need not be insisted on; and I should think, a transaction so curious as a de-

* Heb. iv. 15.

liberate contest betwixt the Son of God and the Prince of the Devils, the Saviour and the Destroyer, might invite any thinking reader of the Scripture to an examination of all the particulars relating to it.

However, I do not mean to hold it up merely as an object of curiosity, but rather to propose it as a lesson necessary to be understood by every Christian in his militant state: to weigh the circumstances attentively, compare them carefully with the Scripture, and draw some *moral improvement* from them; which should be the scope of all our researches in divinity.

I. Before we descend to the particulars of the temptation itself, we should enquire into the reasons, *why* Christ was tempted. He who had Glory with God before the world began, could want no merit to bring him back to that inheritance, of which he was in possession before all time. So that this temptation must have befallen him for our sake: He was to conquer temptation, because man had been conquered by it. We cannot well account for the actions of the second Adam, but by looking back to the history of the First. Adam, in his primitive state, appears to us as the most excellent as well as the last of those works, all of which were pronounced to be *very good.* Thus pure and perfect, he was placed in the garden of Paradise, where the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God had conspired to pour out the riches of the Creation. Yet he was placed in a state of trial: capable of ensuring to himself and improving the good he was possessed of, by means of the Tree of Life, the Sacrament of the first Covenant; or of falling into evil, by means of the Tree of Knowledge, the instrument of Temptation; as his own choice should determine. The Tempter, under the name of *the Serpent,* and with all his evil properties of subtlety,

venom, insinuation, and duplicity of tongue, was permitted to offer his reasons, and put the fidelity of our first parents to the trial by the force of his artifices; who, on the other hand, had the express declaration of their Maker to direct and support them. He began with persuading them *to eat;* and the inducements he proposed for the committing of this act, applied themselves in such a manner to all the appetites, that this original temptation seems to have included every other. In the constitution of man, there are but three kinds of lust to be satisfied; and they are reckoned up in few words by St. *John*, where he means to give us a summary of all that is in opposition to the love of the Father—*the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life* *. The first of these, the "lust of the flesh," was to be indulged by eating for the gratification of the flesh. The second was applied to, by an object *pleasant to the eyes*, fair, flattering, and beautiful to look upon. These are qualities which give birth to covetousness; a vice seated in the heart; but which finds its way thither through the eyes. The *pride of life*, is that impatient desire of distinction, which is daily transporting one half of the world out of that sphere in which the providence of God hath placed them. In vulgar minds, the love of outward appearance is the prevailing principle; but the desire of intellectual superiority is much more active and extravagant; and differs from the other as an evil spirit differs from a bad man. To this passion the tempter applied himself, with that insinuation—"Ye shall be as Gods, "knowing good and evil:" and it was accordingly

* 1 John ii. 16.

believed, that the *Tree of Knowledge* was *a tree to be desired to make one wise.*

Let us observe the method of the deceiver. God had revealed his will with regard to this matter: he had expressly affirmed, "In the day thou eatest "thereof, thou shalt surely die." The words were so categorical, that nothing but *private judgment,* imposing a *sense* of its own, and commenting with views opposite to the will of God, could possibly render them ambiguous. The instrument of the temptation was called, the Tree of the *Knowledge of good and evil:* from which denomination, the Devil thus argued; that as it was a tree of *Knowledge,* they would certainly know something more than they knew as yet, by partaking of it. Then he suggested, that the knowledge *of good and evil,* was a superior wisdom, the same in kind with the wisdom of God; "your eyes (said he) shall be opened, and ye shall be "*as Gods,* knowing good and evil." That the tree had its appellation from God, and that the sentence, *ye shall surely die,* was the sentence of God, he did not deny; but he put his own *sense* upon them. He and his children have been at the same work ever since: they allow (or seem to allow) the Bible to be the word of God; but use it only as the vehicle of some private doctrines, borrowed from the stores of reason and philosophy, *antecedently* to an examination of the Scripture; and these doctrines they impose on the simple with the sanction of a divine authority. Therefore let us *take heed how we hear;* every person who takes the Bible into his hand is not fit to preach the word of God from it; and especially he, who brings to it a mind already vitiated with human principles, or diabolical intentions. The word was first ruined by a lying orator, perverting

the terms of divine Revelation; which, if they needed any exposition, might have been safely and surely expounded by comparing them with one another. When a foreign unnatural interpretation was admitted, man who was in honour *abode not, but became like the beasts that perish.* He was driven out from the presence of God into this wide world, there to struggle with pain and labour, and never more to return to Paradise, but through the way of temptation, and the fire of divine wrath; the former of which he did not withstand in a more perfect state, and (of himself) is far less likely to do it now; the latter would consume him in a moment. Hence it becomes necessary, that the way to Paradise should be restored by some other, able to resist sin, and to abide the wrath of God. And thus the fall of the first Adam under temptation, gave occasion to the second Adam to appear in the flesh, and to be tempted therein, as the representative of him and of all his posterity.

II. The frailty and disobedience of man were exemplified a second time in those Israelites, who were called to a state of probation in the wilderness. In this case, we see not one man only, but a whole nation falling after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Immediately after their *baptism unto Moses in the Red Sea,* they were led into the wilderness, where a spiritual kind of meat was provided for them, even Manna: as the Tree of Life had been provided for Adam in Paradise: and with the same design also, of trying and proving whether they would be found worthy to enjoy the effect of it. "The Lord thy "God led thee these forty years in the wilderness— "to prove thee—and fed thee with Manna, that he "might make thee know that man doth not live by "bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out

"of the mouth of the Lord doth man live *." Yet it was not long before their souls began to *loath* that *light bread*. They are said to have *tempted God by requiring food for their lusts*. On other occasions, they distrusted his providence, and supposed he had led them into the wilderness to *destroy them with hunger*. For these offences they died before their journey was accomplished, and lost the sight of the promised land.

The fall of Adam and of the Israelites, are examples, in the guilt and disgrace of which the whole human species is involved. As all men were in the loins of Adam when he sinned, his obedience was theirs: therefore as he was removed from Paradise, and as the Israelites fell short of the land of promise; so the apostle scruples not to affirm, that *all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God*.

III. Christ was tempted then, that he might do that in our nature, which no man had been found able to do for himself. His perfect obedience was to satisfy the justice of God, by making whole that Law which we had broken. And his experience of the allurements of sin, and the appetites of human nature, was intended to give a comfortable assurance to all his followers, that he will make every favourable allowance for their infirmities. Having been tempted in all points like as they are, he is inclined to succour them when they are pressed with temptation, and to administer the proper help in time of need. How he could have had this assurance on any other principle, doth not appear.

IV. We are now to examine those circumstances, which were preparatory to the matter of the tempta-

* Deut. viii. 2, 3.

tion itself: and I think the whole will be more easily understood, if we look back upon the two cases above mentioned, and refer to them as often as we have occasion. The time at which the temptation happened, is the first thing that occurs to us.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil *.

The context will inform us, that this came to pass, in the interval, between his baptism in the river Jordan, and his entrance upon his ministry as a preacher of the Gospel: for we are told, at the 17th verse of the same chapter, that Jesus *from that time began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.* It was *after* his baptism, that he might not undergo this trial till he was prepared for it by the Holy Ghost, then conferred on him as on other men; and though in a very different measure, yet by the ordinary medium of water-baptism. It was *before* his preaching, that having withstood the wiles of the adversary, and conquered sin in his own person, he might recommend and enforce *repentance* to all his hearers.

The particular which occurs next, is the agency or direction by which Jesus was introduced to the temptation: he was *led up of the Spirit.* Having received the Spirit in baptism, and obtained that testimony from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son;* it might be expected, that He who was declared to be the *Son of God,* should be *led by the Spirit of God.* And for our sakes he was ready to go where the Spirit directed Him; though, as it appears to us, under every circumstance of disadvantage and terror. The scene of his temptation was the *wilderness.* Paradise had been

* Matth. iv. 1.

forfeited by the fall of Adam, and the just judgment of God had driven us from that scene of happiness into the world, as into a barren and desolate wilderness. In the second Adam, we see things working backward again to Paradise and the Tree of Life. He, as our representative, takes our nature, with all the disadvantages of its situation, and places himself in a wilderness, where sin had placed us. But as the dispensations of God are found to accord in a wonderful manner with one another, this circumstance of the place has respect to the temptation of the Israelites; who, after their baptism in the Red Sea, were proved in the wilderness, and fell there, without reaching to Jordan, and the borders of Canaan. Christ, therefore, being baptised in Jordan, goes thence to be proved in the wilderness; returning as it were to meet the trial over again, and defeat the adversary where the strength of his people had failed them *. To this place, a desolate howling wilderness, the Spirit led him, in absolute solitude, without either meat or drink to support him, there to spend many days and nights, among the *wild beasts* †, at the hourly hazard of his life; and to be tempted of the Devil, more cruel as well as more subtle than every beast of the field. What was the temptation of Adam or of Israel when compared with this? The introduction to the temptation of Christ, the prospect at

* Commentators are not agreed about the particular wilderness here intended; whether it were the same in which the Baptist was prepared for his ministry, and which might be *beyond Jordan;* as the place also was in which he first exercised his baptism; or whether it were some other more remote: but however this may be, the words of *Grotius* are worth observing—*Complementum hoc erat veteris figuræ; nam et populus Israel per solitudinem ductus.* See *Poli Synops.* in loc.

† Mark i. 13.

the first entrance, would have blasted the courage of any other man, and have terrified him out of his senses.

V. But we are now to apply such light as the Scripture affords us with regard to the circumstance of his *fasting*, and the particular period or duration of it—*when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.* Though nothing is here related to us by St. *Matthew*, but that Christ *fasted forty days and forty nights*, yet we learn from the account of St. *Luke*, that during these forty days, he was *tempted of the Devil:* but as to the kind and quality of the temptations then presented to him, whether sensual or intellectual, visible or invisible, the Scripture is silent; such only being published as happened at the end of forty days, and which are more expedient for us to know. It is scarcely to be imagined that the tempter would be idle himself, or permit Christ to remain unmolested in his solitude, even for a single day: but the passages are omitted, either as being too copious and superfluous in themselves, or dangerous for us to be acquainted with, or above the reach of our capacity to understand.

During all this time, he *fasted;* mortifying the body, and bringing it into subjection, that it might obey the dictates of the Spirit. When the bodily appetites are gratified, the intellectual faculties are not at liberty to be influenced by the Spirit of God. He only who can endure *hardness*, and can practise it by choice, will be able to endure temptation. To this rule Christ himself submitted: as to baptism, for the obtaining of the Spirit, so to fasting, that he might concur with the motions of the Spirit: and it was proper also upon another account; for the act of eating having given occasion to the fall of man, it was

natural that the Redeemer should undertake to reverse our condemnation, by the opposite practice of fasting, and mortification.

VI. Concerning the period of *forty days*, the words of St. *Luke* seem to imply, that it refers to some other transaction of the Scripture, as a counter-part and accomplishment; and that this precise time of forty days, rather than any other, was proper to the occasion. He says, *when the days were ended*, or, as the Greek will bear, "when the days were *fulfilled*;" the word being the same as in that passage of St. *Mark*, "what shall be the sign when all these things shall be *fulfilled*?" But I lay no great stress upon the word: for whether the expression of the Evangelist implies it or not, the period of forty days doth certainly connect this transaction with many others in the sacred history; and there is reason to suppose, that the period itself was derived from some very early occasion. After revolving it long in my thoughts, I would propose the following conjecture to those who are skilful in the Scripture; namely, that the first man spent forty days in Paradise, and that in this period he was tempted, fell into sin by eating the forbidden fruit, and forfeited the Tree of Life, with the inheritance of immortality. If this be supposed, the period of forty days will occur naturally in other transactions, and particularly in this of our Saviour's temptation, which is evidently founded on the temptation and fall of the first Adam. The *curse* brought upon the world by the flood, and occasioned by the Sin committed in Paradise *, was forty days in the execution; for so long the rains were descending, and the great deep emptying itself upon the earth's sur-

* See Gen. v. 29.

face; that the sin and its history might be recognized in the punishment. When the Israelites searched the land of Canaan, that second paradise, which was to be the reward of their probation in the wilderness, they had a forestate of it for forty days*; and the people who murmured at the evil report of the faithless Spies, were condemned to wander forty years in the wilderness, a year for a day: so that this penance symbolizes again with the curse which was consequent to the loss of Paradise.

Under the ministry of the prophet Jonah, the space of forty days was allowed to the Ninevites, as an interval, in which they might have opportunity of averting the divine judgment by repentance and fasting. Moses spent forty days and forty nights upon the mount, when he received the tables of the law, from the hand of God: and the same act was repeated, on occasion of the tables which were broken. During his continuance in the mount, he *did neither eat bread nor drink water;* and his fast was observed in a wilderness. *Elijah* also, when he fled out of Judæa, crossed the river Jordan, and fasted forty days and forty nights in that wilderness wherein mount *Horeb* stood; where *Moses* had twice fasted for forty days, and where the Israelites were led about in a state of penance for forty years.

This general agreement on so many occasions concerning the period of forty days, might probably be derived from the original I have supposed; but however that may be, it could not happen by chance; and therefore it might well be said, when Christ had fasted forty days, that the days were *fulfilled;* this period, according to the abundant testimony of the

* Numb. xiv. 33, 34.

Scripture, being more suitable to the occasion than any other. As he suffered and rose again *on the third day*, according to the Scripture, so he fasted *forty days* according to the same Scripture: and the example of Moses, independent of every other testimony, would have been thought sufficient to prove this, in the opinion of many good judges, both ancient and modern.

VII. The *hunger*, which arose in our blessed Lord, when the forty days were expired, prepared the way for the first temptation which the Scripture hath recorded: so that the history, now descending to particulars, begins where Satan began with Eve in Paradise, namely, with a persuasion to *eat;* and on such *principles* as were contrary to the will of God. *The tempter came to him and said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.* The Devil is called *the tempter* at his first appearance, and had acquired the title by many acts, especially by one, prior to the present occasion. The same Spirit had found his way into Paradise, to seduce the parents of the human race, in the character of *the Serpent*, the only name under which we hear of him in the Book of Genesis. But in the Book of *Revelation*, the figurative and the proper names are applied to the same agent; and being taken together, the person intended by them is sufficiently ascertained—*He laid hold on the* Dragon, *that* old Serpent, *which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years* *. Under his ancient character, and upon the same business which first brought him into the world, he presents himself to Christ in his solitude, and makes his attempt in a personal conversation, as at first in

* Chap. xx.

the Garden of Eden. Under what figure he appeared, it is not very material for us to know, and it would be fruitless to enquire. It is much more for our purpose here to observe, that he doth not operate upon our Saviour by any internal suggestions, as upon other men, but by a discourse from without: and the reason of this is worth inquiring into.

VIII. When the nature of man was as yet uncorrupted by sin, the wicked Spirit had no immediate access to the heart, but was obliged to tempt *Eve* in the way of a personal conversation; as she also afterwards tempted Adam. But when his lies had taken effect, the condition of our nature was changed, and he who had spoken from without, acquired by the just permission of God the privilege of speaking from within. As the poison of the Serpent's mouth diffuses itself over the whole frame of man, and soon carries its effects to the vital parts; so did the power of the spiritual Serpent get possession of the heart, and of all that is within us, our thoughts, desires, and affections. He is styled, *the Spirit that now worketh IN the Children of disobedience* *; and that *strong delusion*, as it is called, with which they are visited who receive not the love of the truth, is, when more literally rendered, *deceit working within them* †. To convince us of this mortifying fact, so inconsistent with the presumed dignity of human nature, the bodies as well as the souls of men were delivered up to be agitated by evil Spirits; and Christ cast them out from the body in the presence of the multitude, to shew that he only can make us free, and restore us to the original immunities of our nature, by dislodging the Devil from his habitation in the heart and

* Του νυν ενεργουντος ΕΝ τοις υιοις της απειθειας. Ephes. ii. 2.
† Ενεργεια πλανης. 2 Thess. ii. 11.

ffections. In one of the parables of our Lord, the same evil Spirit is signified by a *strong man armed*, who *keepeth his palace, and his goods are in peace.* The passions, converted into his domestics, become obedient to his word; and the will cannot resist him, so long as it is insensible of his tyranny. Till *a stronger than he* comes upon him, he is unmolested in his dwelling: for man doth not know, till revelation informs him of it, that he is infested by such an Usurper: and they who are but half-instructed in the principles of the Gospel, are too apt to be indifferent in their attention to the powerful operations of this infernal Agent, who is almost totally forgotten in some cold and barren exhortations to moral virtue independent of Christian faith. Perhaps it may be thought low, impertinent, and discouraging, to be bringing in the agency of the Devil upon every occasion: but it is to be feared, he hath most to do now, as of old in the heathen world, where he is least thought of. It is our duty, and will be found our greatest wisdom, to take the Christian system as we find it; to omit imaginary improvements, and to believe as the Scripture directs; which informs us too plainly to be contradicted, that the Deceiver hath seated himself in the human heart, and hath gotten possession of our interior œconomy. And if the Scripture had given us no other evidence, this one consideration would for ever satisfy me, that our nature is depraved, and that sin, from the fall of Adam, is *original** to the constitution of man, as certainly as that the captive of an Algerine renegado is not pos-

* This doctrine gave rise (how early I cannot find) to the ceremony of exorcism, which was performed in the primitive Church, together with the office of baptism, and that not only in the baptism of adults, but of infants. See *Suicer* under the word ἐξορκισμος.

sessed of the freedom of an Englishman; though I do not here stand to enquire *how far* the cases are parallel*.

IX. But that influence to which other men are subject could not extend in like manner to the person of Christ. In him, we have another perfect man, untouched by the tempter, and upon the terms of the first Adam. To him therefore, as at first, the evil spirit makes his approaches from *without*, proposing his suggestions in a personal conversation—*The tempter came to him and said, If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread.* In this, Christ is persuaded, to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, by unlawful means, and to labour for the *meat that perisheth*, instead of that *which endureth to everlasting life.* His reasoning is to this purpose; "if thou be the Son of God, thou canst "not want power and interest sufficient to obtain "bread for the satisfying of thy hunger. No Father, "even amongst men, if his *Son* ask *bread*, will give "him a *stone* instead of it: therefore *these stones* at "thy command will be turned into bread; provided "thou really art, what the voice from heaven hath "declared thee to be, the *Son of God;* and also that "thou art in want of bread; of which there can be "no doubt after such a course of abstinence." This reasoning is plausible, and seems inoffensive: but the

* On the Text of Eph. ii. 2. *Theophylact* has this remark; *ουκ ειπε, του αναγκαζοντος, αλλα του ενεργουντος οθεν δηλον ὁτι ἑκοντων αρχει· ενεργει εν τοις υιοις της απειθειας, τουτεστι, τοις μη πειθομενοις μεν Θεω, πειθομενοις δε εκεινω, ουκ αναγκαζομενοις*—"He hath not said, of the Spirit which *compelleth*, but which *worketh in* the children of disobedience; whence it is manifest that Satan ruleth over *voluntary* subjects"—volentes *per populos dat jura*—and again—"He worketh in the children of *disobedience*, that is, in those who do *not obey God*, but obey him, without compulsion."

evil tendency of it is made to appear by the answer it received—"It is written, man shall not live by "*bread alone*, but by *every word* that proceedeth out "of the mouth of God." Christ, in his necessity, is tempted by Satan to distrust the care of God, and to *take thought for his life, what he should eat*. The bread which he persuaded Christ to provide by a miracle was not the *true bread*, but that food of the body, which is the primary object to those whose affections are not set upon God. Our first care should be to secure that which *endureth to everlasting life;* and then the care of God, according to his word, will be engaged to provide the other, or to put us in a way of providing it, by some lawful means. When he led the Israelites into the wilderness, he provided that food by a miracle, which could not be provided by the ordinary means: when he sends us forth into the world upon our duty, he gives his promise, that he will *never leave us nor forsake us*. And by the same rule, the emptiness of the wilderness could not leave Christ unprovided, when he had placed himself there by the direction of God. Therefore he answers, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every "word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. "They who can believe, that this bread is of so much "importance as you would persuade them, will not "long be innocent; and as soon as they attempt to "procure it *in your way*, they will be guilty." If Eve had made a like answer, the world had never been lost. To her the Devil offered an inferior sort of bread, when the food of immortality was at hand. The Tree of Life grew in the same garden with the Tree of Knowledge; but it was provided for the spiritual appetite; and the Tempter succeeded by adapting his Temptation to the carnal.

X. On another occasion, the Israelites were tempted in like manner *to lust after evil things*. When they were *suffered to hunger* (as Moses reminded them) they murmured against their leaders, and wished to partake once more of the bread of *Egypt* *. In this time of their necessity, they were supplied with bread from Heaven; that very food to which our Saviour referred in these words—*He fed thee with Manna, that he might make thee know, that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.* For Eve in Paradise the Tree of Life was provided: these Israelites in the wilderness were fed with Manna from Heaven: in each of these cases there was a provision of supernatural and heavenly nourishment; but in each it was rejected, and the preference given to another sort of diet; which was attended with servility and misery in Egypt, and with spiritual death in Paradise.

When Christ was an hungered in the wilderness, a method was proposed to him, whereby he also might have fallen after the same examples of unbelief: but this, instead of seducing him, as it had succeeded before, gave him occasion to reverse the sin of man by making a contrary choice: and thus the Devil was taken in his own snare.

XI. The next attempt of the adversary, is to make Christ assume his own character, that of a tempter, even a tempter of God; a character which argues the highest degree of presumption, and is peculiarly odious, because it is defiled with the wickedness of the Devil; who, being a spirit, can be guilty only of spiritual wickedness. *Then the Devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the*

* Exod. xvi. 3.

Temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, he shall give his Angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. By this we discover, that the Devil is acquainted with the Scripture, and can reason from it with a malignant gravity, to serve his own wicked purposes. We think it a sign of godliness, if a man is diligent in turning over the Bible. But certainly, this rule is not to be relied upon, because it hath been perused by the Devil, the father of all mischief; and it hath always been applied to, and now is, by many, with the spirit of the Devil; a Spirit which turns the Scripture against its own Truth; using it as an engine accommodated to all the designs and doctrines of darkness. He that would deceive *a Christian*, must do it with a Bible in his hand. Therefore Satan, whose office it is to deceive, hath been careful not to neglect the reading of the Scripture: but he who listens to it when thus perverted, hath the means of his Salvation turned into the instruments of his destruction; and is in that fearful state, wherein the things that should have been for his wealth, become an occasion of falling.

XII. If we examine how the Devil accommodates the Scripture to his own purposes, we shall gain some insight into the mystery of iniquity, and the working of Antichrist. He gives a literal interpretation of a figurative passage; which ought to teach us, whence the literal interpretation of such Scriptures is derived. "Cast thyself down," says he, for "the Angels will "bear thee up, lest thou *dash thy foot against a stone.*" He had planted Christ upon the top of those mighty stones and buildings which composed the Temple at Jerusalem; a situation, from whence no man could

cast himself down, without being dashed in pieces before he came near the ground. But it having been promised to the Messiah in the Psalms, that he should not *dash his foot against a stone*, the Tempter persuades him, that the Angels would bear him up aloft in the air, so that he should be supported wonderfully in an upper Region, without any peril of being dashed against the walls of the Temple, or of alighting upon the earth in such a manner as to endanger his life. Had credulity or vanity, or both together, prevailed upon Christ to comply with this proposal, he had committed himself to the *Prince of the power of the air;* had forfeited the protection of God, and the ministry of the holy Angels; who were not engaged to assist in any such wild undertaking as this; and if his immediate death had not followed from natural causes, it seems reasonable to believe, that the Devil would have been permitted to destroy him in his fall.

The promise of God, according to the intention of the Scripture, was only this; that the Angels should have charge over the Messiah, to preserve him in *all his ways* (which words the Tempter omitted, as not for his purpose,) from the offence and mischief of Sin. Thus it was said of Christ himself, that he should be a *stone of stumbling* and a *rock of offence* to the people of Israel: not such a *stone* as their feet should literally stumble at, nor such a *rock* as they should fall against to the breaking of their bones; but a person, with whose life and doctrine they should be so offended, as to stumble morally in the course of their obedience, and fall into sin and the judgment of God.

If the text be taken in this its true sense, how absurd is the Devil's inference! "The Grace of God, "and the ministry of his Angels shall keep thee "from offending and falling into Sin; therefore, cast

" thyself down from the top of the Temple!" If the Devil understood this Scripture himself, he must have supposed that Christ did not understand it, or that vanity would corrupt his judgment. By the answer he received, the matter was cleared up in very few words, and his mouth was stopped upon this subject. —*It is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God:* Our Saviour quotes another Text of Scripture, to shew that the Devil had quoted his wrong: and this is the only effectual way; for God can neither contradict himself, nor be the author of Sin. The Text, as here misapplied, is an encouragement to *tempt* God, with the view of putting his power and veracity to the proof, and render both of them subservient to human fancy; so that nothing more was necessary, than to shew briefly, in the words of Scripture, that the attempt was contrary to a plain prohibition. Spiritual wickedness can find no apology but from the word of God ignorantly or maliciously interpreted: and whatever they who are thus employed may imagine or pretend, malice will influence the interpretations of some men, as surely as it did influence that of the Devil. This was the method first observed in Paradise. The forbidden Tree was marked out to Adam and Eve by the word of God, as the Tree of the *Knowledge of good and evil;* from which expression, the Devil taught Eve to expect a divine and God-like knowledge from it; and thus prevailed upon her to put the word of God to the trial, in contempt of that other positive declaration— *In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die.* Here he proceeds upon a like foundation—" God hath pro-
" mised to bear thee up that thou fall not into sin;
" try therefore, whether his Angels will not bear thee
" up, and preserve thee from falling to the earth."

Had the experiment been made, the same consequence might be expected as in the case of Eve. Such is the nature, and such are the devices of spiritual wickedness; that peculiar sort of wickedness, which originates in the Devil; for in all this there is nothing of the world nor of the flesh. The fleshly appetite had already been applied to, to produce distrust in the providence of God: here the mind is stirred up to a godly sort of insolence and presumption, the most mischievous and desperate of all wickedness, whether we judge of it by its temper or by its effects. The matter of the next temptation is suited to the pride of life and the appetite for worldly glory.

XIII. *Again, the Devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: and saith unto him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*—to which St. Luke adds—*for that* (the world and its glory) *is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it.* The Devil being the father of lies, is not to be trusted in any thing he utters, without a suspicious scrutiny; yet it seems in part to be true, (and it opens an ample field for speculation) that this world is committed to him, and that he has power to bestow it, by God's permission, on those who comply with the condition of *falling down and worshipping* him. The four great monarchies of the world, by whom its power and glory were possessed, the *Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, Roman,* were all heathen, and consequently devoted to Satan. The whole world of the Gentiles, when it was exhibited to Christ from the top of the mountain, was in this state, being not yet redeemed *from the power of Satan unto God.* It is remarkable, that the conquests added to the Roman Empire in its heathen

state, dropped away from it by degrees in its Christian, and were made over to barbarians and idolaters, who came down like a torrent from the northern regions. What was anciently the Roman Empire, is now broken into a multitude of fragments, and distributed among the independent Princes of Christendom. No rapid conquests have been obtained, no grand extension of Sovereign Empire, but by Turkish infidels, who began with abominating the worship of our Lord Jesus Christ; and who rose to such sublimity of power and splendor, as hath in a manner eclipsed all the glory of the western kingdoms for nigh a thousand years past. But leaving these reflections to be carried on by those, who are acquainted with the succession of Empires, and the revolutions of the world, I return to our blessed Saviour; who refused to comply with the proposed condition, and, from the mention of it, detected the Devil, and called him by his proper name—*Get thee hence,* SATAN; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. He who proposes a contrary object of worship, must be *Satan,* the apostate, the rival, and the adversary of God.

It is not an evil thing in itself to possess the power or the glory of the world; but only when it is obtained on the Devil's terms; for Christ himself, by refusing it when offered in this form, received it with infinite increase from the hands of God—*All power is given unto* him *both in heaven and in earth;* He is *King of Kings and Lord of Lords,* and his name is *above every name.* Having conquered in this trial, and refused to bow to Satan, *every knee shall bow unto him;* and all the principalities and powers in earth and heaven have now no greater honour than to be his subjects and servants.

XIV. The temptation being thus ended, and the Devil having exhausted his artifices for the present, *departed from him*, as St. Luke observes, *for a season;* to return once more in the hour of darkness, and take every advantage of his sorrows and sufferings. For the adversary of mankind can plough in every soil, and scatter such seeds as will grow in every climate; accommodating himself with equal skill to the sunshine of felicity and the clouds of adversity. But the conflict being over for the present, Christ obtained higher blessings from God even in this world, than the Devil could offer as the rewards of Sin—*Angels came and ministred unto him*—He who had suffered hunger for the fulfilling of righteousness, and without departing from his hope and confidence, had a supply of refreshment from heaven itself; he who accepted not honour and power when offered to him by Satan, was attended as the Lord of heaven and earth by the Spirits and ministers of the most high God.

XV. The *moral intention* of Christ's Temptation hath less difficulty in it than the preceding parts of the subject. In all the other remarkable passages of his life, we consider him as an example or pattern to his disciples. He may safely be taken for such in this account of his Temptation; which, short as it is, doth set before us every kind of danger that can occur to us in the course of our Christian warfare. And why should the prospect of being *conformed to his Image* terrify or displease us? Are we Christians in fact or in name only? Doth not reason require, that if we expect to be distinguished from the world by *rejoicing* with Christ, we should first be content to *suffer* with him? That if we wish to be *crowned*, we should first be *tried*? How do we reason with our-

selves in similar cases? If a person be diseased in any limb, or wounded, and there be no hope of his recovery till it is cut off, he submits to hear the surgeons consulting about the operation, and exposes himself to the pain of it, in hope of that ease and health which they promise as the consequence. And why should a man be less prudent and less resolute for the benefit of his soul, than for the preservation of his body? It is better to purchase health with the loss of a limb, than that the body should remain intire, and perish of its disease. It is better that the appetites should be disappointed; that life should seem imperfect; and that every occasion of offence should be cut off: than that a man should be ruined in the other world (and probably in this also) by resigning himself up to be directed by those Egyptian task-masters, his own lusts and passions—*It is better to enter into life* halt *and* maimed, *than having two hands or two eyes to be cast into hell fire.*

If we consider the snares that are laid for us, (never without some *bait,*) and the certain consequences of disobedience, we shall find it necessary to be circumspect: and if we look forward to the reward promised to *him that overcometh,* we shall not think it hard, if such difficulties occur as are common to those who have engaged themselves in a military life. A state of war is not a state of enjoyment, but of exercise and danger: and it is far better that the soldier should be persuaded of this, and adopt it as a principle, while his arms are in his hand; than that he should discover the truth of it, when he is a disarmed captive in the hands of a merciless enemy.

XVI. With seriousness then, but not with fearfulness, we may draw near to behold the nature of our own calling, in this glass of our Saviour's Temptation.

His baptism in Jordan was the Introduction to his Ministry in the world; and he was then declared to be the *Son of God.* At our baptism, we are the adopted Sons of God, and enter upon the course of the Christian life. We are required to renounce the world, the flesh, and the Devil, the professed enemies of our Salvation; who will meet us, as we come forward in life, under a variety of disguises, and endeavour to seduce us from the Law of God. Our master did not offer himself to the Tempter, that his followers might live in indolence, and have nothing to encounter; but that they might know how to *withstand in the evil day.* The Sons of God are not permitted to remain in a supine expectation of the promised inheritance; but are *led up straightway out of the water* into the *wilderness,* there to be *tempted of the Devil.* As the Israelites, after their baptism in the Red Sea, were led into the wilderness; and as Christ was led up straightway from Jordan into the wilderness; so we are brought from the Laver of Regeneration in the Church back again into the world, there to sojourn for awhile, till *God* hath *proved* us, *and found us worthy for himself**.

This being the end for which God permits us to be tempted, we are exhorted by St. *James,* to *count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations.* But then, as an haughty Spirit goeth before a fall, and lest we should be too forward, presuming upon our strength; we are taught to pray daily to our heavenly Father, that he would *not lead us into temptation.* Before a temptation hath reached us, we are to distrust ourselves, and to pray that God in his mercy would deliver us from the trial: and upon this consideration,

* Wisdom iii. 5.

happy is the man that feareth always *; who knowing his own weakness, will not rush hastily into the battle. When we read the histories of campaigns, whether ancient or modern, foreign or domestic, this moral presents itself to us every where, that a confident enemy is sure to be beaten; because it is the nature of confidence to be *unprepared.* But when we find ourselves visited with any *trial of our faith,* we are to rejoice under it on this account, as knowing the wise and righteous design with which it is sent upon us, and accepting it as a divine testimony of our adoption and election. Yet here again we are upon slippery ground, and must take care not to mistake *a falling into Sin,* for a *falling into Temptation.* He who is tempted can have no reason to rejoice, but so far only as the trial gives him an opportunity of proving the power of his good principles, and of shewing his fidelity to God by resisting and overcoming the temptation.

XVII. The Christian must prepare himself to receive the assaults of Satan, as Christ also was prepared: that is, by abstinence and mortification. What was the case with those champions, who prepared themselves to obtain a *corruptible crown,* such as was bestowed in the heathen sports upon him that conquered in running, wrestling or fighting? For some months before the great day came, on which their skill was to be proved, they abstained from all gross diet, anointed their bodies, and exercised their limbs: to which St. *Paul* alluding, observes—*he that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.* And can it be thought unfit, that the servant of God, who *wrestleth against principalities and powers,* should use

* Prov. xxviii. 14.

abstinence and fasting; when they, who *wrestled against flesh and blood*, allowed the necessity, and submitted chearfully to the practice of it?

The comparison by which the Apostle hath illustrated this matter, will set the doctrine of *fasting* in its proper light: for as the temperance observed by those combatants was no part of their mastery, but only prepared the way to it; so the practice of fasting is not to be insisted upon for its own sake, but rather for its effects; as it *brings* the *body into subjection*, and thereby rectifies the mind that it may be ready to obey the dictates of the divine Spirit, and resist the allurements of vice. Fasting is not the victory itself, but a preparatory circumstance: therefore he who pleaded his fasting as a merit in itself, and said, *Lord, I fast twice in the week*, while he had failed of the effect, and was still of a proud unmortified spirit; that man departed from the temple without receiving any testimony of his *justification*.

XVIII. The design of fasting being rightly understood, it will thence appear to be necessary; however some Christians may have given themselves the liberty of disputing against it; while others have treated it as an object of raillery and ridicule. God, they say, hath required no such service at our hands (though Christ himself hath given directions for the rational observation * of it, and connected it with the duties of *prayer* and *alms-giving*); the gospel is the marriage of Cana in Galilee, a state of perpetual festivity; fasting, a barren virtue of the cloister, fit only for the sour, melancholy, superstitious monastic. The Reformation had many great and good effects; but it had this bad one, that it induced some to

* See Matth. vi. 17.

throw off such restraints as are necessary for a Christian, and to improve themselves into libertines: so universally true is the old observation—*Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt*—"*Fools correct one evil by another.*" But they who argue for such improvements, offend against the rules of common prudence, and are ignorant of the first elements of Christianity. What an extravagant opinion must they entertain of their own sufficiency! If Christ himself, considered as a man endued with like passions with ourselves, was not fitted for temptation without a previous mortifying of the flesh; what are they pretending to? are their abilities greater than his? surely they must think so: and that they are able to conquer vice in the midst of ease and indulgence, for the accomplishing of which Christ himself *fasted*, and that for *forty days*. The notion is equally absurd and presumptuous; suggested by the tempter himself; who, knowing that the passions are headstrong, and the reasoning faculties weak and abject, when the body is indulged, counsels us to *eat and drink and rise up to play;* to mix with the worst part of the world at all seasons, and abstain from none of its recreations, that we may be ready to follow him who will guide us into fire and brimstone, instead of that blessed Spirit who would lead us to the felicity of Heaven. This is the method he inspires for the overcoming of all temptations. But we have not so learned Christ; whose example being now before us ought to convince us, that as he went into a lonely wilderness, and fasted forty days, we also, if we wish to conquer the world, the flesh, and the Devil, must attempt it in a state of abstinence and retirement. It is necessary that we should perform the duties of society, and it is better for us that

we should mix with the world on many occasions, than that we should avoid it; because a pious caution may very easily degenerate into a disdainful misanthropy, the very reverse of the Christian Spirit: but it may safely be affirmed, that he who would know how *to use this world as not abusing it*, must learn his lesson, not *in* the world, but *out* of it.

XIX. Thus prepared we may be able to stand against the enemy; who will assuredly come to us, as to Eve in Paradise, and to Christ in the wilderness; making the same offers, and urging the same reasons as before (for he has nothing new), and commonly in the same order. When Christ was an hungered, *the Tempter came to him, and said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.* God, who was able to support Christ in the wilderness, hath promised to support us in the world, and give us all things requisite toward the supply of our temporal necessities. The Tempter bids us distrust his providence, infusing the injurious opinion, that we are sent *into this wilderness to perish with hunger*, and shall certainly be obliged to make provision for the flesh in opposition to the law of God. How many thousands fall into this snare! some through indolence; others through the want of education and discipline; and some of pure malignity. They accept what the Devil presents, and convert it into a livelihood. Even good men are not exempt from the hazard of offending, by having recourse to unlawful methods of advancing themselves and enriching their families. It may be pleaded, and I doubt not but it hath been pleaded very successfully, that good principles in bad times will have the natural effect of raising them enemies, and keeping them in obscurity; that godliness never was a thriving trade, but

in the days when hypocrisy was rampant; that truth and integrity are condemned to associate with poverty, and must therefore be *sold* to supply present occasions.

Distrust may have the same effect upon the pious, as presumption hath upon the impious, and may raise similar reflections in the mind, all tending to an *Epicurean* exclusion of divine Providence. The latter saith, *Is there knowledge in the Most High?—He careth not for it—He hideth away his face, and will never see it*—So likewise the former is tempted to ask —*Shall God prepare a table in the wilderness?* Yes: for that is the place which requires the interposition of his power. When human succours fail, and human endeavours cannot answer the purpose, there is a fit occasion for us to *lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help:* and the servants of God are sometimes brought into such a situation, that it may appear whether they will *cast their care* upon Him who *careth for them,* and hath commanded them *to take no thought* (no anxious despairing thought) *for the morrow;* promising that He will never leave them nor forsake them. The goodness of God can find us out in the middle of a desart, in the most unpromising circumstances; and if our faith endures the trial, his *angels* will be sent to *minister unto us:* some hand unlooked for, the instrument and messenger of an invisible power, may administer an abundant supply of all our wants: and they who will trust to the declarations of the divine word, will not be disappointed. *The eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord, and thou givest them meat in due season; thou openest thine hand and they are filled with good.* But then it is to be understood, that the animal creation which receives the blessing of God, and is supported by his bounty, is

always in action: the beasts are employed in daily labour; birds of the air are upon the wing from the dawning of the day to the close of the evening; the bees and the ants improve every interval for the encreasing of their stores; therefore it would be vain to imagine, that indolence in man can entitle him to the bounty of his Maker.

XX. Man being composed of body and spirit, two kinds of nourishment are set before him; the *meat which perisheth,* and is designed only for the bodily appetite; and the meat which *endureth to everlasting life,* given to us by the Son of man in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. It is called *meat indeed;* as if no other deserved the name when compared with this. The Eucharist is in the church what the Tree of Life was in Paradise, and what the manna was in the wilderness; a test of our faith and hope, as well as a vehicle of spiritual life: and it meets with the like reception; for the souls of many do *loath this light bread.* It doth not encourage any aspiring thoughts as to this world, nor doth it pretend to gratify the lusts of the flesh: so it hath nothing that can recommend it to those who *walk after the flesh.* Its efficacy extends only to the nourishing of the soul, and prepares it for a better life. But what is this to the covetous, the ambitious, or the sensual; whose thoughts and views are terminated by the objects of this life? Spiritual meat requires a spiritual appetite. There is an hunger of the mind, as well as an hunger of the body; and our Saviour hath signified it to us in those words—*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.* If men do not come to be thus filled, it is a sign they have no such appetite as is here intended: and a want of appetite is a bad symptom, which, if not removed, must

end in the death of the patient. It is much to be lamented, that when God hath prepared a table for us in this wilderness, and given us the true *bread from Heaven*, of which the manna was no more than a symbol, many who have been baptized and brought up to read that Scripture, wherein it is written—*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you* *, can yet be easy under a total neglect of the holy communion; by which they reverse their baptism as far as it is in their power, and expose themselves under a voluntary excommunication, a sentence of spiritual death pronounced against them by Christ himself, who came into the world for no end but to offer them everlasting life. In this case, the flesh is preferred to the spirit, and the little concerns of this present world to the great objects of an higher state. And to convince us that the neglect is unpardonable, the same persons will frequently be found wise in their generation, able to reason and draw consequences, cunning and circumspect in driving a profitable bargain, and diligent in the business of their vocation, for the benefit of themselves and their families.

XXI. There seemeth to be yet another shape under which this temptation occurs to us. The *word of God* is the *bread* by which *man liveth:* and as the Devil offered a stone to Christ instead of bread, it should follow, that he offers something to us instead of the *words of eternal life;* something which is not bread, but capable, as he persuades us, of assuming its appearance and producing its effects. The Jews fell under this temptation, when they substituted the false wisdom of human tradition, and sometimes of

* John vi. 53.

heathen idolatry, in the place of the divine law; why else did the prophet ask them—*Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread**? For we learn from the prophet *Micah*, that the false prophets who amused the people with lies, *divined for money*†. Thence the prophet goes on to shew, that the true bread is the revealed wisdom of God—*Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good—incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live.* Our heavenly *Father*, if we *ask* it of him, will not *give us a stone* instead of this *bread* of divine knowledge; but the father of lies hath no other bread for his children. The wisdom he hath to communicate, how finely soever it may be set off with a pompous sound of words, and a friendly desire of delivering us from imposition, is as unfit to nourish the soul, as a stone is to feed the body. With this, however, he hath deceived mankind in every age. The false wisdom of the heathen philosophy was one of these stones: the Jewish *Talmud* was another; the Alcoran of Mahomet another; and amongst us, of later years, he hath been handing about a thing called the *religion of nature*, a system of *deism*, whose principal object is *a God* without a *Christ;* against which many are now breaking their teeth, while they expect, on the word of a *Shaftesbury*, or a *Bolingbroke*, &c. to feed their understanding. This religion of Satan teaches us, that the human mind can bring forth a Revelation of its own, much better than that which is *vulgarly received;* that reason is the only sure guide; nature the only agreeable rule: fables which are wonderfully acceptable to the pride of man; but at the bottom of them all, there lurketh

* Isaiah lv. 2. † Chap. iii. 11.

the old insinuation—*Ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil*—able to dictate to yourselves, instead of being directed and led about like children. Such advice as this, expressed more at large, and in many different ways, makes a great figure in some works of genius, with which they who love darkness rather than light are highly captivated: and it may pass for wisdom now: but it will one day be exposed to all the world as the worst of folly, and will confound and surfeit the inventors themselves—*Bread of deceit* may be *sweet unto a man*, because every thing will be so which flatters his pride, *but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel* *.

The light of revelation can alone teach us how to look upon such miserable impositions; and, when applied, it detects them to the bottom. Therefore, *if any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not* †. If this bread of life is asked of our heavenly Father, he will give it *liberally*, freely, and without cost; neither will he upbraid us for the importunity of our request, but approve and honour us for so laudable a desire. But if we seek wisdom from the father of lies, he will give us a *stone;* and then mock at us, and upbraid us, for being so blind and ignorant as to mistake it for *bread.* He *tempts* men only that he may have an opportunity of *accusing* them; and it is to be feared, many who are now very high in their own conceit, must stoop at last to be derided by the Devil.

XXII. We proceed now to the next article of the temptation. He *taketh* Christ *up into the holy City, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,* &c. What is this to us? The Temple at *Jerusalem* is destroyed;

* Prov. xx. 17. † James i. 5.

so that the Devil cannot place us there; neither can it be supposed, that he will place us on the summit of any other sacred edifice. We are in no danger of this temptation according to the letter of it: but our business here is to enquire into its moral; and in doing this, we shall soon discover a sense, in which he may bring us into a like situation, and tempt us to a presumptuous sin, which cannot be committed but with reference to an *holy* place. The sin which is visible at first sight, in the face of this account, is that of "tempting God, by leaping from his church "into the air, and defending the practice by a text "of Scripture." The Papists say, we committed this sin at the Reformation: and if I thought they had supported the accusation with a good appearance of reason and authority, I would stop here to argue the cause; but I apprehend little need be said to convince any impartial Christian of the contrary *. So we may go on, without any interruption on this account, to inspect the quality of the temptation.

The temple of *Jerusalem*, so long as the legal system prevailed, was the church of God, and the seat of his religion. But it was no more than a *figure for the time then present*, and was accomplished in the Christian church; that society which Christ erected by his own immediate act and authority, and into which all his followers were incorporated. If we would learn how to respect this Church, we must look to the example Christ himself hath set us in the respect he paid to the other. At twelve years of age, he departed from the company of his parents, to associate with such as he found in the temple; which certainly was neither of the best nor the wisest. He

* See *Remarks* on the *Confessional*, p. 68.

expressed great zeal for the honour and decency of the place, when he drove out those people with a scourge, who there carried on a worldly traffic; and he forbid any common use to be made of it*. He frequented the temple, as the proper theatre of his doctrines and his mighty works: he *sat daily teaching in the temple,* and thither *the blind and the lame* resorted to him, to be healed of their infirmities. They who desired to hear him, or to be healed by him, found him in the temple: whence the inference is obvious, that they who would find him *now,* must seek him in his church. His example becomes more forcible under this application of it; because the Christian church is as much more worthy of our reverence, in some respects, than the Jewish temple, as the blood of Christ is more precious than that of brute sacrifices. But in respect to unity, charity, and obedience to the ordinances of God, the members of the church, in both its states, have been under like obligations.

While we remain with the church, we are entitled to its privileges; and while we think ourselves happy in the place and office there assigned us (though our place be only at *the feet of Jesus Christ,* and our office no better than that of a *door-keeper)* we have our share in the promises of God, and may hope to be *saved even as others.* But as the restraints of law are hateful to all libertines; so ecclesiastical rules of salvation are never patiently endured by an aspiring temper. When the Devil finds a proper subject to work upon, he takes him up aloft, and places him in an aerial situation above the church; from whence he will look down upon others, till his head becomes giddy: and when his pride hath weakened his judg-

* Mark xi. 16.

ment (an effect it never fails to produce) he resolves to forsake the church of God, and leap off into the air; presuming on the enthusiastic notion, that the promises of God do not belong to him as a member of the church to which the promises were made, but to *him* as an individual; and that he may apply them to himself, when he is become *a church to himself;* with an assurance, that the ministers of grace will be as much engaged to wait upon him, when he is falling through the region of heresy and schism, as when he is conforming himself to the doctrines and ordinances of God in the spirit of a Christian.

XXIII. The Scripture is always perverted by those who fall into this crime of spiritual wickedness; and they accomplish their purposes in these three different ways. Sometimes, they take a text independently, so as to make it militate against the tenour of the divine law: as that text concerning the *liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free* *; which if it be applicable to the religion of some who have it often in their mouths, must mean an exemption from the authority of his own Gospel. Whereas, if the text is taken with its natural dependence, it *freeth* us from nothing but the *bondage* of the *Jewish law*. At other times they allegorize and explain away the literal part of a scriptural precept, ordinance, or doctrine, so as to render both parts ineffectual: or give a jejune and literal sense to words which are to be spiritually, or at least figuratively, understood. This latter was the practice of Satan on the present occasion. He separated the word *stone* from its metaphorical meaning, to change the true sense of the promise, and promote his own malicious intention. They are guilty

* Gal. v. 1.

of a like error, who wilfully separate the edifice of the church from its spiritual relation to God, and consider it merely as a pile of stone and mortar, that they might lightly regard all that belongs to it.

XXIV. We cannot secure ourselves more effectually against this sin, than by meditating on the text in which Christ replied to the Devil—*Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*—If we seek the protection and salvation of God, we must make no vain experiments, to turn his truth or his power out of their proper channel: if we hope to receive the benefit of his promises, we must be content to receive that benefit in his own way; *by* the ordinary means of grace, his word and sacraments; and *in* the church, that visible society, wherein alone those means are administered. To invent any other method of salvation, however it may seem to be favoured by perverted texts of Scripture, is to *tempt God;* having first flattered ourselves, that because he hath promised to be with us while we are with his church, he must therefore send his angels to bear us up when we have quitted our station, and have ventured upon a flight through the air.

XXV. This was the prevailing sin of the last century; when a great part of this unhappy nation was intoxicated with spiritual pride. It was no unusual thing for the preachers and devotees of that time to reason with God Almighty with all the familiarity of Moses himself, but with none of his discretion and charity. Schism and sacrilege, treason, rebellion and murder, were promoted with an air of sanctity; and the promoters themselves were the agents of heaven, appointed to purge the church of superstition, and bring in a purer sort of religion by the methods aforesaid, copiously justified and recommended by

impertinent applications of the Scripture, which it would be endless to recount.

XXVI. It having pleased God to shew us the miserable effects of such pretensions, it will certainly be our greatest wisdom to recur to the primitive system of faith and practice. The method may seem low and slavish to the fanatic and the philosopher; but we are taught, that God *humbles* a man in the beginning of his course, that he may *exalt* him in the end of it: while the Devil, on the other hand, raises him aloft at the first step, that he may soon be gratified with his downfall. Instead of following Satan up to the heights of pride, and standing on the *pinnacle,* either of *sanctity* or *speculation;* let us abide by the old exploded doctrines of submission and obedience for conscience sake. When a man in his own conceit is become higher, and wiser, and better than the church, charity hath forsaken him, and it will not be long before he forsakes the church: but whether he can humour his pride, and make such an experiment with safety to his person, it behoves him to consider very seriously before the experiment is made. If he hath made it in his heart, and his worldly interest restrains him from putting it in practice, the case is little better, and in some instances it may be worse; because we know not what allowances may be made for the weakness which arises from the example of parents and the prejudices of education. Besides, the excluded dissenter quarrels with the church (or did so formerly) only on the score of its *discipline:* but the included dissenter hath an aversion to its *doctrines.*

XXVII. Much advice is held forth to us by the Scripture upon this important subject; which, if collected together, will be something to this effect.

" If thou art a child of God, adopted by him in bap-
" tism, and brought to a state of salvation, be not
" wise in thine own opinion; but, like a *new-born*
" *babe*, receive the *sincere milk of the word* *, that
" thou mayest grow thereby: hear thy mother the
" church, which hath brought thee forth unto God:
" continue stedfastly in the *apostles' doctrine* and *fel-*
" *lowship* †, who themselves *continued daily with one*
" *accord in the temple;* neither placing themselves
" above it, nor raising tumults within it: so shalt
" thou *dwell under the defence of the Most High, and*
" *abide under the shadow of the Almighty:* thou shalt
" receive the benefit of his covenant, and have hope
" in the best of his promises. He shall then indeed
" *give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all*
" *thy ways;* who, after they have borne thee up in
" their hands from the dangers of sin and offence,
" shall *carry* thy peaceful spirit *to the bosom of Abra-*
" *ham;* there to rest from its labours, till it shall be
" perfected in the kingdom of heaven, where sin and
" sorrow cannot enter, and *charity never faileth.*"

XXVIII. Having now reviewed the temptations to be expected from the *flesh* and the *Devil;* we are to examine the moral of the third and last; wherein the Devil offered to Christ all the kingdoms of the *world* and the glory of them, on this condition—*if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* It may be remarked by the way, that the Devil, who teaches men to depreciate all external forms of religion, and advises us to worship God with the pure adoration of the mind, omitting the ineffectual ceremony of bodily prostration, will not be worshipped so himself; but requires his servants to fall down, with their knees bent, and

* 1 Pet. ii. 2. † Acts ii. 42. See also v. 47.

their faces directed to the earth, to signify the reverence and submission of the mind by the visible humiliation of the body.

To shew Christ the kingdoms of the world, he took him up to an *exceeding high mountain*. He will lead us also from the pinnacle of spiritual pride to the exceeding high mountain of earthly ambition. The Christian, after the example of Moses, may climb the mountain of Contemplation, there take a view of the promised land before he dies: but, with regard to the things of this world, he will be more secure in the lower regions of humility and obscurity. Yet few stations in this world are so obscure as to be wholly removed from the solicitations of covetousness and ambition. Imagination is easily tempted to make excursions, and place itself where the world, with its wealth and its corruption, if not with its glory and empire, will be offered, to seduce it from its allegiance to the only true God. "There "needs not a kingdom to ruin a covetous soul; half "a one will be more than sufficient; and even *thirty* "*pence* would prevail on some to act as *Judas* did "for the same poor reward."

XXIX. If the good things of this world are really committed to Satan, as he hath said, it is certainly with this restriction, that he may bestow them on those who will fall down and worship him. And as the world is not to be obtained *from him* but upon this condition; they who will move hell itself rather than go without it, will comply with the condition for the sake of the reward. Therefore the vice of covetousness is the same with that idolatry; although the Devil does not appear in a visible shape with a command to fall down and worship him. He hath many substitutes, besides the graven images of *Jupiter*,

Mars, Thor, or *Woden,* to which the adoration that is paid will answer his purpose as well as if it were paid to himself in person.

Certainly it is not an evil thing in itself to be intrusted with the good things of this life. The evil consists in taking them on the terms of our adversary. They are often promised to the children of God, and come from the hand of God himself, who *giveth us all things richly to enjoy;* adding this wholesome charge, that they who are rich in this world *trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God.* The Devil's instructions are of another kind; he gives wealth that the heart may be with it; that the soul and the body may be given up for it; that our belief in God and our hope of heaven may be bartered away for it: God gives it to us, only to be held in trust for the highest purposes; that earthly treasure well applied, may purchase for us the treasures of immortality. This is the way to *use* the world without *abusing* it; and thus it is *possible with God,* that the *rich man* also may *enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

When this treasure is presented to us by the Devil, and we are to have the world as the reward of Sin, then we are to turn away with scorn, and reject both the offerer and the offering. Our blessed Saviour bore the other temptations with mildness and patience; but this offer of the world in exchange for an act of treason against God, raises his indignation. And every designing wretch, who treats with any man for the purchase of his conscience, deserves to be dismissed with the same sharp rebuke—*Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* He who refuses the power and glory of the world from Satan,

shall receive greater power and eternal glory from God. By disdaining to receive any dominion under him, he shall shortly reign over him, be appointed as one of his judges, and shall see him trodden under his feet.

XXX. When the mind is prepared against these three sources of temptation, the world, the flesh, and the Devil, it is instructed in the way of righteousness. But let no man think himself safe because he hath escaped one or two of them. He that hath brought the flesh into subjection, may be ensnared by covetousness and vain glory: and he that hath overcome the world and the flesh, may fall into spiritual *pride* and *the condemnation of the Devil* *. To every particular caution, this general one must be added—*Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.* For as the Devil, after his defeat, departed from Christ only *for a season*, with full purpose to make a farther attempt upon him in his sufferings: so is the follower of Christ to expect trials and dangers from the same quarter, till he hath given up the ghost, and is entered into that rest, where the *wicked cease from troubling*. So critical is his condition, so subtle, vigilant, and persevering is his adversary, that he cannot be secure, till he is out of the reach of temptation. Whence it is rightly said——"Be thou faithful *unto death*, and I will give thee the crown of life †."

XXXI. On a review of this subject, these are the principal matters which occur to us. Christ hath been tempted for our sakes; and we must follow him to glory through the way of temptation. Our baptism prepares us for the trials and dangers of a wilder-

* 1 Tim. iii. 6. † Rev. ii. 10.

ness. The Israelites were not brought to Canaan, without being proved by hunger and thirst, by the allurements of idolatry, by the spiritual gainsayings of Corah, by the power of formidable enemies, and by an evil report of the spies concerning that country to which they were going. We have their example to give us warning, and the example of our Master to give us encouragement. Both are necessary: the one to save us from carelessness, and the other from despair. Neither the love of pleasure, nor the fear of danger, should provoke us to *think scorn of that pleasant land* which lieth before us; where temporary tribulation shall terminate in perpetual enjoyment. If we are but wise enough to consider the issue of things, and compare their ends with their beginnings, we shall have a short rule of prudence, which by the grace of God will direct us safely through all the perils of this life, and shield us against all the assaults of the Devil. Sin betrays men, as *Jael* betrayed *Sisera*. She meets him, and entertains him friendly; she invites him, gives him drink, and lays him to sleep: but in the midst of his security, she strikes him through the brain, and fastens him to the earth. Every temptation begins with *milk*, but ends with an *instrument of death*: allurement comes first, and vengeance followeth after. But God observes a contrary course; placing the *evening* before the *morning* in a moral sense, as at the natural creation. The ordinary custom is, to give *good wine at the first*, and when *men have well drunk* and have lost their judgment, *then that which is worse*: but Christ, as at the marriage in *Cana*, reserveth that which is best to come last in order. The Devil begins in a high strain of encouragement—*Ye shall be as Gods*—but, in the event, brings us to a level with *the beasts that perish*.

Religion, on the other hand, saith—*mortify, and ye shall live—take a yoke, and ye shall find rest*—be content with obscurity, and ye shall *shine as the Sun in the kingdom of your Father*. Therefore, *Blessed is the man, who endureth Temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of life.*

XXXII. A general remark may be made on this subject, which may serve to rectify a specious error adopted of late years by many persons; who pay small regard to the spirit of Christianity, as thinking it our chief duty to avoid offences against society. A good life, they pretend, is the best orthodoxy, and such as will recommend us to God better than modes of faith and devotion: and by a good life, they mean a course of moral justice betwixt man and man. But whatever value the Scripture may have ascribed to good works, it would contradict its own design, and oppose common sense, if it were to prefer them in an independent state: for they cannot exist but in a state of relation. Principle is the root of practice; and if we would make the fruit good, we must make the tree good. But to talk of practice independent of principle, is to expect grapes from a tree which hath no root.

The man, who can believe that God is either regardless of his condition in life, or envious of his liberty and happiness, will provide for any of these by evading human laws, and transgressing the divine precepts, as often as they stand in the way of his pleasure or interest. He who worships Satan in his heart for the sake of worldly advancement, will practice lying, robbery, treason, murders, and all other evil arts which may conduce to the transferring of power and property from other hands to his own. What fightings and perjuries have arisen from a lust

of power! What persecution and cruelty hath been practised by idolaters against the servants of the true God! Spiritual pride and self-elevation amongst Christians will be followed by the same fatal effects. Let a man think himself a saint of an higher class, and separate himself with a pharisaical spirit, and then he will assume a right to *bind kings in chains, and nobles with links of iron:* he will snatch property from the hands of those, who in his opinion are less worthy of it than himself, and will attempt to do *God service* by oppressing and destroying those who are displeased with his innovations.

When these things are considered, it will seem neither strange nor improper, that no one of the sins to which Christ was tempted by the Devil, were sins against society. We hear nothing about murder, adultery, theft, false witness, or any other sin against our neighbour; the temptation being conversant about such sins only as pass between God and a man's own heart. The first of them is a want of faith in God, as the preserver of men; the second is spiritual pride; the third idolatry. How few are there now, who make a proper account of them! A man may distrust the providence of God, despise his church, confound Jupiter with Jehovah, sell his conscience in a reputable way to the Devil; and yet find those who shall think him a very rational, decent, good sort of a Christian. When the Serpent explained to Eve the grounds of the divine prohibition, he said, *God doth know,* &c. and we may say on the other hand, with all that truth which his explanation wanted,—"The "Devil doth know, that in the day when he can per- "suade us to commit these sins we shall make no "scruple about the rest:" for these are mother-sins, big with the whole race of offences against civil so-

ciety. By these therefore all the purposes of his temptations are more cheaply and effectually answered. He succeeds better by sapping the foundation of morality, than by making a partial breach in the walls: and many who are armed against the open assaults of gross wickedness, may be ruined by that which is more refined, and of which they do not as yet foresee the natural consequences: but, according to the proverb of the ancients, *wickedness proceedeth from the wicked* *; wickedness of the manners from the wickedness of the mind; so that if the enemy can debauch the mind, his temptation is accomplished; because such a mind will never fail to corrupt the manners.

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 13.

THREE DISSERTATIONS

ON

LIFE AND DEATH.

VIZ.

I. A Survey of the Brevity and Vanity of Human Life; with the Consolation administered by the Christian System against both.

II. Considerations on St. Paul's Wish, to depart and be with Christ.

With an Appendix on the Intermediate State.

AND

III. A Commentary on Rev. xiv. 13. in which the Nature of Death is farther considered.

DISSERTATION I.

A SURVEY OF THE BREVITY AND VANITY OF HUMAN LIFE: WITH THE CONSOLATION ADMINISTERED BY THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM AGAINST BOTH.

THE mortality of man is no where described with so much propriety and elegance of expression, as in that passage of the book of *Job*, which the Church hath adopted as a part of her *burial-service;* placing it in the front of those short and solemn sentences, which are repeated at the side of a Grave, and in which all the powers of language are summoned together, to strike the minds of the hearers with commiseration, devotion, and self-abasement.—*Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble! He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not.* Job xiv. 1, 2.

It is generally easier to understand any thing in its image than in itself, provided the image is well adapted. This method presents a subject to us under a compendium, which, if loosely considered, would be too large for the mind to comprehend; and might also be weakened by being extended. In its effect it certainly exceeds all others; on which account, Ora-

tors, Poets, and Mythologists, who have been skilful in their several ways, have never failed to apply themselves to the human mind through the interposition of sensible objects.

The relation between the visible world and the intellectual being very extensive, the most striking figures of speech must occur to us in *that book*, wherein the intellectual world is best understood and explained.

The vanity of human life is a wide subject: but it is here represented to us in a short compass, under the two images of a *flower* and a *shadow*.

Man *cometh forth as a flower*. The flowers of the field rise out of the earth; and man is also made of the dust. As the flower grows up, it is exposed to all the varieties of the weather; to rough blasts and clouded skies: it is driven to and fro with the wind; and receives upon its tender head impetuous rain and storm from above. Man, in like manner, is frail and weak in his constitution, as the grass of the field; and from his infancy is exercised with trouble.—Labour of body and carefulness of mind he is sure to inherit: to which are frequently added the loss of health and strength which easily depart from him, and are not to be renewed, without the utmost difficulty and uncertainty. His temporal affairs are perplexed with unexpected disappointments: nay, the very comforts of his life are the sources of new trouble. If his possessions, his friends, or relations are dear to him, it is so uncertain whether *they* are to abide with *him*, or *he* with *them*, that he is exposed to perpetual fears and dejections of mind upon their account; and may really suffer as much, or more, from his nearest friends as from his greatest enemies. And if his comforts and blessings can yield him trouble,

his life can then be no other than a scene which is *full of trouble.*

Thus exercised with the weakness of childhood, the passions of youth, the cares and afflictions of riper years, man is at length *cut down* by death. He *cometh forth* like a flower, and comes to the same end: he grows up with a certain prospect of dying; as the flower groweth among the grass, only to fall before the hand of the *mower;* that is, to be *cut down, dried up, and withered.* His beauty, if he had any, changes into a paleness shocking to the sight. If he had wealth, honour, and power, he sinks to the same level with that vulgar croud, which is daily swept away to people the regions of Death: as the finest flower, when once it is cut down, loses all its colours, and is no longer distinguished from the common grass in the field.

There is something so apt and natural in this image, that we find it applied in many other places of the Scripture. The royal Psalmist in particular thus expresseth himself: *As for man, his days are as grass; as the flower of the field so he flourisheth. For as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.* The Prophet *Isaiah* hath spoken to the same purpose; and his words are followed by the apostles St. *James* and St. *Peter. All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.*

But the life of man is also compared to *a shadow.*— *He fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not.* In the morning, when the sun rises, shadows are born. At first they are weak and faint; but as the sun increases in height, near the noon-day, they grow strong and

distinct: in the evening, as the sun goes down, the *shadows are stretched out,* and increase swiftly in their length; the moment the sun sets, they vanish, and darkness succeeds.

There is not a moment in the day, in which a shadow is at rest. The sun from his first rising is hasting forward to his setting; and the shadows move with a motion contrary to that of the sun. As soon as they appear in the morning they begin this progress, and never rest till they vanish into darkness. Here again we have another exact image of man's life; which, like a shadow, is empty and unsubstantial: it bears the form and figure of something, but will deceive those who mistake it for an enduring substance. As the shadow tends toward darkness throughout the whole day, man's life is nothing but a progress toward death.

Every hour and moment of the day bring the shadow nearer to the night; and every step a man takes brings him nearer to his grave. Such is his life in its most regular course: but how frequently doth it happen, that the sun is hid from us, and the heaven overcast with clouds in the middle of the day? In such a case, the shadow vanishes before its time: and man, in like manner, as frequently departs, before his progress is half finished. If the sun shines never so bright, we cannot be sure but that a cloud may soon arise from some quarter of the heavens, which by obscuring the sun shall cause the shadow to depart; and there are then no more traces of it to be found than if it had never been. Thus in the strongest man, in whom there is every outward appearance of health, and a fair prospect of long life, some unexpected disease may arise, which in a very short time shall *change his countenance, and send him away.* Many changes

happen in the day between the rising and the setting of the sun; yet the existence of a shadow depends altogether on this uncertainty in the face of the sky. And man's life is as mutable; it depends upon the state of a perishable body, in which some cloud may be arising, while he expects nothing but a continuance of the sun-shine till the day hath fulfilled its regular course.

The condition of mortality is therefore represented under no disadvantages, but such as are real and natural to it, in this description—*He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not;* or, as it is more plainly expressed in the original—*he fleeth as a shadow, and standeth not still*—his life is not stationary at any period of it: but, like the shadow upon a sun-dial, is always moving forward to the hours of darkness.

In all this nothing has been declared but what is commonly known: for no man can be ignorant of that, which by the experience of every day appears to be the common lot of all men. Yet this is very wonderful, though it is very common. And let us now enquire into the reasons of it.

Man was the last and most perfect of the works of God. The Sun, Moon, and Stars, glorious as they are, were placed in the heavens at the bare word or command of God. Trees and plants were made to grow upon the earth, and the various sorts of animals were endued with life by the same word.

But when man was to be created, there was a formal consultation in heaven; and this creature came forth from the hands of his Maker, adorned with the image and likeness of God himself. A *Spirit of life* was *breathed* into him, from the divine nature; he was made but *little lower than the angels* of light, and

all things were put in subjection under his feet. How does it happen then, that the Sun and Moon, which are far inferior in dignity, retain their places and their glory, while man is changed, and sent away, and the place he possessed knoweth him no more? The oak, and many other trees, endure for several hundred years. Men were born when they were planted; yet the trees thrive and flourish; while those men are turned into dust beneath their roots *. The lord of all the creation, invested with power and dominion, *is a flower that fadeth:* the image of the eternal and unchangeable God is a *fleeting shadow.* How can these things be? With this question the Philosopher is confounded; and all the wisdom of the world must falter in the resolution of it. It is the Christian only, who receives his wisdom from the word of God, that can reconcile these seeming contradictions. The holy *Job,* who was by no means unacquainted with the history of man, derives the cause of his miseries

* The longevity of Trees, compared with the Mortality of the Planters, yields a contrast so obvious as well as mortifying, that it could not well escape the observation of the poets.

——Neque harum, quas colis, arborum
Ulla BREVEM dominum sequetur. *Hor.*

Esculus in primis, quæ, quantum vertice ad auras
Ætherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.
Ergo non hyemes illam, non flabra, neque imbres
Convellunt: *immota manet, multosque per annos*
Multa virûm volvens durando sæcula vincit.

Georg. II. 291.

Virgil is happy in his choice of the *Beech:* for I was lately informed that a Grove of Beeches, which, according to an authentic Record, were cut down in the year 1666, to furnish timber for the rebuilding of London after the fire, and then replanted, are not yet, in the space of 104 years, arrived to their full growth.

from the manner of his birth—*Man that is born of a woman*—for by a *woman* sin entered into the world; and sin is the parent both of the sorrows and the shortness of human life.

The Psalmist, speaking of himself as a natural man, saith—I *was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.* Thus is sin interwoven with the nature of man, and makes a part of his constitution from his very birth. *The wages of sin is death.* And by these means the course of things hath been changed: which also seems to be alluded to, where we read, that man is *of few days;* for the original saith, he is *cut short in his days;* his life is not of such an extent as God originally designed it to be. There is a doctrine which seems highly agreeable to the Scripture, and hath been well maintained by some early writers in the Church, that, if man had retained his innocence, his life would have lasted for a *thousand years,* and ended, not in death (as it does now) but as that of *Enoch* did, in a *translation* to the presence of God as it is manifested to the angels.

But this privilege was forfeited by the entrance of sin. And it is worth remarking, that the lives of men before the flood were always short of a thousand years. Some there were who came very near to that period; but not one that ever attained it perfectly. Death never failed to call them away, before they had attained the life of Paradise.

Their lives, however, were so much longer than the lives of men are now (the difference being very great between seventy years and seven or eight hundred) that it is certain, man doth not die so early by any original necessity of nature. No tree planted by the hand of God in Paradise had out-lived him, if he had not transgressed the divine command.

But now he is a tree, with an ax laid to the root of it; and is cut down in wrath, long before his life hath reached to its extent: *his bones lie scattered before the pit, like as when one breaketh, and heweth wood upon the earth.*

When the sentence of death was first executed upon the generations of men, the time of their abode on earth was much longer than it is now: God, who remembers mercy even in his wrath, departed as little as might be from his first rule. But in process of time, the corruption and wickedness of the world made it necessary that the period of human life should be contracted to a much smaller number of years *: and this dispensation, severe as it may seem, proceeds wholly from the *mercy* of God, who willeth not the *death* of a sinner, but is desirous that he should turn from his sin and be saved. The world is now a theatre of temptation, sin, and wickedness; and it is the interest of man, that the days of his pilgrimage in such a place should not only be few, but also that they should be *full of trouble.* For the happiness of man is now to arise from his misery; as God at first made light out of darkness, which is contrary to it; and doth generally bring his purposes to pass by such means as seem to be of all others the most unpromising; in which practice, the difference between the workmanship of God and that of man doth principally consist. How many thousands and millions do we see in the world, who, short as life is, seem to think they have many days to throw away in idleness and vanity? And even among those who attend to the precepts of the Gospel, some there are, who

* Semotique priùs tarda necessitas
Lethi *corripuit gradum.* Hor. lib. i. od. 3.

think the offices of devotion may be omitted for the present time, promising themselves some future opportunity of attending upon God and the concerns of their own souls. But let them remember, that God hath contracted the life of man into so short a space, and made the date of his days so very uncertain, only that the Christian may be always upon his guard, and be prevailed upon to lose no single opportunity of doing good to himself and others.

Upon the whole then, we have nothing to complain of. Sin and death having entered into the world, this is not a place for any man to set his affections upon: and for this reason, he is *cut down like a flower*, and *fleeth as a shadow*. By the shortness of his days the number of his temptations are lessened: and yet, short as they are, he has time enough to prepare himself for the kingdom of God; which is the work he is sent into this world to perform.

Thus far, the view we have taken of this subject hath been but dark and uncomfortable. We will now consider it in another light: for this state, which consists but of *few days*, and those *full of trouble*, is recommended to the Christian, and sanctified, because God himself hath *partaken* of it for this purpose. He also condescended to become man in the person of Christ, and was *born of a woman*. He entered, by the same way, upon the same state we are now in; and, by the purity of his conception and birth of the blessed virgin, renewed and restored the human nature. In him that sentence was accomplished in every respect, which was originally passed upon the human nature in general. He was of *few days*; cut off in the prime of his life. Which should teach us, that death may come early, without being untimely; and that an early death is not an evil

thing in itself, but is made such only by an unprofitable, a careless, and an ungodly course of life. The days of our blessed Saviour were likewise *full of trouble;* trouble of every sort; and first, that of poverty. He was born of mean parents, in a stable, among brute-beasts, at *Bethlehem.*

When he went about doing good, he had not where to lay his head; he was reviled and persecuted for his best deeds; forsaken of all his friends, and afflicted to the uttermost both in soul and body: so full of trouble, that the evangelical prophet calls him *a man of sorrows.*

He *came forth* also as *a flower,* springing as *a root out of a dry ground;* and having been agitated by the rough blasts of human pride, diabolical malice, and divine wrath, this *rose of Sharon* bowed its head, and withered upon the cross.

Nor was Christ unlike to his brethren, even in the last article—*he fleeth as a shadow and continueth not.* The 109th Psalm, according to the use that is made of it in the New Testament, is to be understood throughout the whole, as spoken in the person of Christ; who declares concerning himself in that prophetical composition—*I go hence like the shadow that departeth.* For this cause came he into the world, that he might taste of death for every man; and every action of his life brought him a step nearer to Calvary and the cross. In the sight of the unwise his death seemed as vain and unworthy of regard, as the departure of a shadow at the close of the evening. Thus did the *righteous perish,* and no man layed it to heart. They accounted him deceitful as a shadow, an impostor, and deceiver, who pretended to be what he was not.

In these things, every believer must find his con-

solation against the troubles of life, and the fears of death. God himself, being born of a woman, hath experienced all the evils that man complains of: *in all our afflictions he hath been afflicted:* and as that fire had no power to burn, in which the Son of God walked with the three children; so the sorrows of life, and the terrors of death, should no longer be dreaded by the Christian; Christ having endured them for *this* end, that thenceforward they should be deprived of all their force. *Be of good cheer,* says he, *I have overcome the world*—And again—*he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life; and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.* That frailty and misery, which man uninstructed must esteem as the greatest of evils, is by these means transformed into a blessing. By the sufferings of Christ and his sacrifice for our sins, all the sufferings of his servants are sanctified; and we may now say—*he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.* By an act of infinite wisdom, the misery of man is thus turned into a medicine. *Man, born of woman,* is now *born of God:* he that was *of few days,* is now made a living member of that great High-Priest, who hath *neither beginning of days, nor end of Life;* and may lift up his head from this state of trouble, in expectation of *new heavens, and a new earth,* from whence all sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The flower that is cut down shall spring up again from its root that lies buried in the earth; yea, *it is not quickened, except it die:* and the shadow that departeth shall be again renewed by the rising of that Sun of righteousness, which shall go down no more.

Such is the view which the Scripture hath set before us of this great and important subject—the un-

certainty, vanity, and brevity of human life; under which, as we see (whatsoever the world, the flesh, or the Devil may suggest to the contrary) there is no comfort to be found, but from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and a life ordered according to the precepts of it. Our days being few and evil, he is the only wise and happy man, who hath the grace *so to number them as to apply his heart unto wisdom;* such wisdom, as will guide him in safety, through this world of *shadows*, to the great *Realities* of the world to come.

DISSERTATION II.

CONSIDERATIONS ON ST. PAUL'S WISH TO DEPART AND TO BE WITH CHRIST.

WITH AN

APPENDIX ON THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

Our nature teaches us to look upon Death as the greatest of evils; there being planted in the breast of every man living a love of Life and dread of Death; therefore the man, who gives himself up to the ways of this world, drives from him the thought of Death, as a bitter ingredient, which would render every cup of earthly pleasure not worth the tasting.

But alas! it is a thing that must and will be thought of; for it is the portion of every child of Adam; and, bitter as it is, the surest way to make it more bitter is to live and act without the remembrance of it. But he who renders this subject familiar to his mind, and examines it by the light of the Scripture, has it in his power (with the grace of God) to change the nature of it, and turn its bitterness into sweetness. Nay, it is even possible for him to *desire* that as a blessing, which in itself is naturally a curse, and justly regarded as such by the greater part of mankind.

We have an example of this in the Apostle St. *Paul*, who *desired* Death as *far better* than life; not better in itself, but better to *him* in his *circumstances*. *I am in a straight*, says he, *betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better*. The reasons upon which he proceeded in this case will be worth our considering; for if we reason as he did, and follow the example of his faith, no doubt is to be made but that we shall conclude and determine in the same manner. And when this bitterness of death is conquered by the understanding, this life, so long as it lasts, will be less interrupted and better worth the possessing.

I must allow indeed that a person, who brings himself to this frame of mind, will be more serious, and have less enjoyment of that noise, and madness, and folly which the world falsely calls by the names of mirth and happiness. But this I will be answerable for, at the same time, that he will *gain* more happiness than he loses, even in this life. It may be hard to convince any person of this; because human life is never well understood but by those who look back upon it. While the imagination is crowded with untried objects, and the judgment over-ruled by passion, the whole prospect is falsely represented: But at the hour of Death, men are undeceived by the experience of their past life; and all those vain shadows disappear, which used to darken and deceive the understanding.

Let us enquire then into the reasonableness of the Apostle's choice in wishing rather to depart than to abide in this world.

This will appear plainly enough, if we examine what his *life* was, and what his *death* was like to be:

in other words, what he *lost* by living, and what he was likely to *gain* by dying.

We shall find by what goes immediately before the words in which he expressed his desire of departing, that when he wrote this Epistle to the *Philippians*, he was in a prison at *Rome* for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ: with allusion to which he says, *If I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour.* I was appointed a teacher of the Gentiles, to turn them from the power of Satan unto God. I have preached unto them in season and out of season; I have compassed sea and land for the salvation of souls, and the honour of him that put me into the ministry: I have laboured more than the Husbandman for his bread, the Miser for his gold, or the Sinner for the gratification of his lusts: and what is the fruit of it? *This* dungeon in which I am confined, and these chains I wear upon my feet—*If I live in the flesh, this* imprisonment and bondage *is the fruit of my labour.*

On another occasion he describes his life in the ministry as a course of labour, stripes, scourgings, shipwrecks, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, poverty and persecution, weariness and painfulness of body, with constant care and perplexity of mind. And speaking elsewhere of himself and his brethren, he applies to them that passage of the Psalmist—*For thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

I think he also affirms of the Christians of those days that they were introduced to a sort of Death by the conditions of their baptism: they were baptized, not for *the dead* (as the English gives it us) but *for dead* themselves; that is, *as** men thenceforward alive

* The Greek preposition υπερ is not usually taken in this sense; but it doth not appear why it may not be so taken, as the Latin *pro*

unto God, but dead to the works of the flesh; to whom riches, and honour, and pleasure were lost and gone: to whom the world was crucified, and they unto the world. And of himself in particular he speaks under the same figure—*I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.* All the primitive saints had the same opinion of themselves; and *Ignatius* had a way of expressing it with an ambiguity in which there is a singular elegance—Εμος Ερως εσταυρωται—*My Love is crucified.*

Thus we are prepared to determine upon the case already; that it was better to die *once*, than to die every day. And this perhaps would be true, if death were considered only as a deliverance from temporal evils. But the Apostle does not argue in this manner: he does not say, I am weary of my life, and would be gone at any rate; as some desperate people have said in their hearts, and acted accordingly, by laying on violent hands, and sending themselves as fast as they could out of the world (which in this miserable age is a prevailing fashion with rich and poor:) but he compares the present and future together, and then gives his judgment upon the whole—*I desire to depart and to be with Christ.* To *depart* is one thing; to be *with Christ* is another. And this latter was the object of the Apostle's desire: he gave the preference to death, for the sake of those blessed things to which it would certainly introduce him; the chief of which, and under which all the rest are included, is the *Society of Christ.* When our Lord made that promise to the expiring Malefactor on the Cross, *this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,* we

in these expressions—*pro cive se gerit*—he behaves *as if* he were a citizen—*pro sano loqueris*—you speak *as* a man of sense.

may be in some doubt about the meaning of the word *Paradise,* but we all believe that, by virtue of this promise, that man was immediately translated from the misery of the Cross to the enjoyment of peace. The company and presence of the Saviour of the world would of itself constitute a state of happiness. While he was conversant here below, he said to his disciples and followers—*Blessed are the eyes, which see the things which ye see—Many prophets and kings have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them.* And if those Eyes were blessed which saw him darkly through the veil of mortal flesh, when he sat upon a Colt, the foal of an ass, and made his entry into the earthly Jerusalem; what must their portion have been, who saw him triumph over principalities and powers, and enter upon all the glories of his spiritual kingdom?

These are the things, of which the Apostle's faith gave him a prospect, when he said, *I desire to depart and to be with Christ.*

If we now compare the present with the future, as he did when these words were first written, our purpose will be answered at once. His life then, so long as he continued in the flesh, was a state of *labour,* his *departure* would bring him to a state of *rest.* His feet were bound with chains, and his body shut up in a prison; but his chains and his body also would then be left behind, and his Spirit set at liberty for ever. While he lived, the Holy Ghost witnessed in every place, that imprisonments, *bonds, and afflictions,* awaited him; at his death, *that* Paradise, which he had already seen in vision, would be ready to receive him. Here he was tossed about upon the waves of the sea, and those of a more tempestuous world; there he would be above the reach of all storms and

troubles. Here he was company for felons and malefactors in a Jail; there he would meet with prophets, saints, and angels. Here he was apprehended and tried at the pleasure of outrageous Jews and unbelieving Heathens; there he would find the Almighty judge of Jew and Gentile his best friend, his advocate, and his Saviour. Here he lived a *daily* death; there he would enter upon the enjoyment of *life*, without end and without interruption. These things being weighed in the balance together, he determined wisely and truly—*to die is gain—I desire to depart and to be with Christ.*

But if the matter is so clear, how is it that we hear him complain of being *in a strait betwixt two?* Was there any doubt that Death would be *better* to him than life? Or did his faith fail upon a nearer view of that dark and untried passage, which leads from this world to the other? Neither of these things happened to him: his choice was not a doubtful one, nor did his faith fail him; but to his honour it must be confessed, that an higher principle got the better of it. Like a tender father dying before his time, and anxious for the safety of those he is leaving behind, the wife of his bosom, and a family of children not yet grown up and able to provide for themselves; even so did this blessed Apostle consider, how necessary his presence was for the benefit and direction of the family of Christians but lately added to the Church by his preaching, and not yet established in the faith—therefore he checks his desire in the following words—*nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.* For the good of his brethren (or rather his *children*) he receded from his own wishes, and was content, for their sakes, to renew all the labours and sufferings of his ministry, and to put off

the enjoyment of heaven itself. His desire to depart was that of a spiritual man, whose affections had lifted him above the world and the flesh; and we may think it impossible for him to soar any higher, after such a declaration of his *faith* and *hope*: But he himself hath taught us, that *charity* is above them both; therefore his best thoughts and desires were over-ruled by this divine principle.

It may now be useful to shew, that every true Christian hath reason to judge in the same manner with the Apostle, and wish rather to depart and be with Christ than to abide here in the flesh.

It is not the lot of private Christians in these days to be stoned, and imprisoned, and shipwrecked as St. *Paul* was. But nevertheless they are exposed to afflictions, and trials, and dangers, more than enough to make the argument complete. For so long as the Christian abides here in the flesh, his bodily part is subject to that curse and penalty, which sin has unhappily brought upon the works of God. He is a part of that *creation*, the *whole* of which *groaneth and travaileth in pain together*. This burden extends to man and beast; yea, the very elements themselves are disordered with *fire* and *hail*, *wind* and *storm*, fulfilling the commands of an offended Creator.

From this common law of vanity the Christian is no more exempt than other men—*ourselves also* (saith the Apostle) *which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body*. If we open our eyes to take a view of the world, it will appear like one great Hospital, abounding with spectacles of sickness and misery; some pining and wasting away with consumptions; others labouring for breath with an asthma, or shaking with a palsy,

or tortured with the insupportable agonies of the stone. Some have lost their sight; others, what is more precious, their reason and understanding; many are bowed down with the hopeless affliction of incurable diseases; and if some amongst us feel as if they were now in possession of their *strength*, let them wait awhile, and they will soon find it changed into *labour and sorrow*.

So much for the *body*: but the mind is of greater account. The soul of man is lodged in the body, as in its tabernacle or dwelling; but such a dwelling of clay as we now inhabit, serves rather as a prison to shut up and restrain the faculties of the understanding. The Soul in its own nature is sharp and piercing; but while it abides here, it is like a sword rusting in the scabbard. It is formed for reason and reflection, but the more it *muses upon many things*, and gives itself up those pleasures that are afforded by the contemplation of truth, so much the more is it *pressed down* by the *corruptible body* in which it is confined. It would understand high things, and fly up as an eagle toward heaven; but it is like a bird endeavouring to take wing, while a weight of lead, tied to its feet, still brings it back again and confines it to the earth.

Such are the evils which the Christian finds *within* himself. If he looks *without* himself, he sees a world in all respects like an howling wilderness, full of wild beasts ready to devour him.

There is *Satan* that *roaring lion*, always seeking his prey about the Church and amongst the servants of God. There are wolves in sheep's, and sometimes in shepherd's clothing, stealing away and worrying the flock of Christ. There are Foxes, subtle and false teachers, and seducing Spirits in all shapes,

ready to corrupt his mind, and draw him away from that faith which would otherwise lead him to salvation. There are wild Boars, rooting up the vineyard of the Lord, tyrants and persecutors oppressing his servants, and laying waste his heritage.

If we look to his body, *that* is exposed to the secret treachery of the dissembling friend, and the open violence of the declared enemy. His soul is subject to deadly and destructive lusts of the flesh, the dangerous allurements of wordly vanity, and all the suggestions of that grand seducer, who brought death and misery into the world. His goods are exposed to the greediness of the extortioner, the violence of the robber; his lands and houses to overflowing rains, fires, and all misfortunes. His good name is open to slander, his person to contempt and injury. His brethren *should* be his support and strength, but are often his betrayers; and the best comforts of his life do rarely or never fail to be the sources of much sorrow and vexation.

These things are common to all men; but many of them are more common to the good man than the evil, and some of them are peculiar to him. *Many are the troubles of the righteous,* said David; and the way to heaven is *through many tribulations.* Christ bequeathed as a legacy to all his disciples *peace* amongst themselves, but *tribulation* in the world; and he that is a Christian indeed must expect to find it. Therefore afflictions are more common than death; *Enoch* and *Elias* escaped the latter; but none was ever exempt from the former. Nay, they are more common than sin itself, which hath laid hold upon all men; for Christ lived without sin, but not without sorrow.

Labour then is a law to all that have Adam for

their father, and Crosses are a curse upon all that have Eve for their mother. But all these miseries are at once relieved by death. The bond-slave is set at liberty, and the captive exile loosed from his chain: the brow sweateth not, and the heart careth not any longer. The body defieth famine, sword, and pestilence; and the soul is out of the reach of sin and temptation.

The primitive Christians were so sensible of these things, that they had a way of expressing them all in one word by calling their death an *exodus*; meaning by the application of this term, that death was to them what the *exodus*, or departure from *Egypt*, was to the *Israelites*; who, when they were brought to the passage of the Red Sea, had *Egypt* on this side, and *Canaan* on the other; the *Land of Promise* before them, and the *house of bondage* behind them. Of this latter we have had some prospect in what hath already been said; and now let us examine, as well as we can, what the former is.

Here I am authorised by the Scriptures to affirm, that the soul of a Christian, when it is departed from the flesh, does neither fall into a state of insensibility, nor enter upon that perfect enjoyment of which it will partake after the resurrection of the body. Our Saviour argued against the *Sadducees* from that expression in the Old Testament, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*, that these Patriarchs were yet alive, because *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for they all live unto him.*

Thus may we more clearly argue from many declarations in the New Testament, particularly that of St. *Paul, We are willing, I say, and confident, rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.*

Now as Christ said, *God is not the God of the dead but of the living;* so must we say, Christ is not the companion of the dead, but the companion of the living. Therefore, if the dead are *with Christ,* as the words expressly inform us, they are and must be *alive;* alive in Spirit though they are dead in body, according to the truth and meaning of that promise —*he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*

The place in which they live is called *Paradise:* what it means we cannot know exactly; nor did the Israelites understand the nature and productions of the land of Canaan. When they packed up their kneading-troughs in Egypt, they had heard of the land to which God was calling them out, and knew it to be a desirable place; therefore they set out with confidence and pleasure at midnight, though not one amongst them all had ever seen the country they were going to. Their forefather Abraham had obeyed the call of God under the like doubtful circumstances, and *he went out not knowing whither he went.* Thus much we know, that when *Lazarus* was carried by Angels to *Abraham's Bosom,* and when the penitent thief was conveyed to the presence of Christ in *Paradise,* they went where every Christian, who is now struggling with the difficulties of this mortal life, would wish to be.

If we could look but for one moment into that place, I am confident we should think of little else all the days of our life: and if God were to command us to make our way to it through the midst of a fire, we should venture upon the experiment, though we were sure to leave our bodies burnt to a cinder in the midst of it.

If it was better, then, for *Lot* to leave the city of *Sodom,* and for the *Israelites* to leave the pollution

and misery of *Egypt;* it is far better for the servant of God to depart and be with Christ, than to abide here in the flesh.

If we would apply the preceding observations to any good purpose, they should move us to consider, without the loss of a single moment, to what place and to what state Death will translate us. We all have a *departure* in view, as St. *Paul* had; and every man, who is not past feeling, will be in some *straight* when he reflects upon it. It will depend upon our present choice, whether we shall afterwards be present with Jesus Christ and his faithful Apostle; or with *Satan* and *Judas,* and the rest of his enemies. It is a happy thing *so* to depart, as to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord: but it is more miserable than words can express, or heart can think, to depart from this world of ignorance and vanity to another of darkness and torment.

There are too many who live in wilful ignorance of the Christian faith, in the neglect of God's worship, in idleness and drunkenness, in fornication and adultery, in evil speaking, slandering, and blaspheming. When such men reflect upon their own conduct, they must have sense enough to know, that if death overtakes them in such a course, it cannot possibly convey them into the presence of Christ. It is shocking to imagine, that the Angels of light should take upon them the office of carrying a worthless and odious soul into the company of that Almighty Being, in whose presence iniquity is blasted, as wax melteth before the fire.

Perhaps they may flatter themselves with objecting, that Christ, while he was here upon earth, was merciful and compassionate to all, to *Jews* and *Samaritans,* to publicans and harlots; insomuch that his enemies

upbraided him as the *friend of publicans and sinners.* This is very true; and the best of us all can hope to be saved under no other character than that of sinners; but we are to remember withal, that the sinners, to whom Christ shewed himself a friend, were such as first listened to his word, and then *washed his feet* with the *tears* of repentance.

The Apostle himself was once a *blasphemer* and a *persecutor;* nay, he calls himself the *chief of sinners;* but after he had embraced the Gospel, he *knew nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified:* his life was thenceforward unspotted, his labours more abundant, and his sufferings above measure; therefore his death was a passage to life, and his departure from hence a translation to the presence of Christ. God, he tells us, had mercy upon him *for a pattern to those who should afterwards believe in him to life eternal.* And his example is a glorious proof to all sinners, that the grace and blessing of God upon their own sincere endeavours may open for them a way to life and immortality. What we are now, that great Apostle himself once was, a man striving against the infirmities and temptations of this mortal life; what he is now we also may be, through the help of God and the merits of our blessed Saviour, who, when he had *overcome the sharpness of death, opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.*

APPENDIX

CONCERNING THE

INTERMEDIATE STATE.

THE words of St. *Paul* having given me occasion in one part of this tract to insist on the doctrine of the Scripture concerning the *intermediate state*, it may not be unseasonable to carry on our inquiry a little farther.

Eusebius describes a species of heretics in *Arabia*, who maintained that the *Soul* dies with the body *, and lies in that state of Death till the Resurrection. *Origen*, in whose time these heretics arose, was sent to reason with them upon the subject; and prevailed so far as to bring them over to a voluntary recantation. Yet this *Arabian heresy* (as it is called) hath been occasionally revived since the Reformation, particularly by the *Anabaptists*, according to *Edwards* in his *Gangræna*, Part I. p. 22, and Part II. p. 14, 15. A modern writer, now living, hath taken as much pains to uphold and recommend it, as if it were the chief object of a Christian's hope; and the Author of the *Confessional*, who thinks with every man that thinks against the Christian Church, cries up his doc-

* Vid. *Euseb.* Eccl. Hist. lib. vi. c. 36. an. 249.

trine as a most ingenious discovery. But the hope of *mental dissolution* is an hope which agrees best with the inclinations of sensualists and reprobates. I know a man who comforts himself under a course of adultery in his old age with this persuasion, that *when we are dead, we are all one as if we were dogs*. He means, that we sink into a state of insensibility.

If this doctrine were examined by the light of Reason alone, it would be found repugnant to the most generally-received principles of human Philosophy *; and it is certainly inconsistent with Revelation. The Scripture hath taught us, that there are two different principles in the Christian, distinguished by the names of the *outward man* and the *inward man*; the latter of which may be increasing in vigour, while the former is hasting to its dissolution, 2 Cor. iv. 16. The inward principle is that which is *born again* in baptism; and, being *born of God*, is of a divine nature. Consequently, whatever may be said for or against the *natural immortality* of the soul, this principle cannot be subject to death in common with that nature which is *born of the flesh*.

The body is also described as the clothing of the Spirit; so that the soul is with respect to the body, what the body itself is with respect to the garment that is worn upon it: in conformity to which expression, death is described as the *putting off* of the body. Therefore, as the man, who puts off his clothes, doth not also throw off his body, and lay it aside with his clothes in a wardrobe; so neither doth the Christian at his death put off his spirit to sleep in the grave with his body. It is the *dust* only, the earthly part,

* Hæc vero sive a meo sensu post mortem abfutura sunt, sive, ut *sapientissimi homines putaverunt, ad aliquam animi mei partem pertinebunt*, &c. Cic. pro Arch.

which returns to the earth, while the *Spirit returns to God that gave it.* If both are supposed to sink into death together, there will be no sense in that distinction—*fear not them that can kill the body*—because men in such a case are able to kill the soul just so far as they kill the body: and as they both will rise at the resurrection, the soul will have no privilege left but what is common to the body; so that our Saviour's distinction, instead of being the source of any comfort, will have no meaning. The soul therefore is not dissolved with the body: and that it may subsist in a state of separation from the body, and actually does so subsist after death, is plain from the words of St. *Paul;* who observes concerning himself, when he was caught up to the third heaven, that whether he was *in the body* or *out of the body,* he could not tell. But there could have been no possible doubt, unless he had been well assured, that the soul might be taken out of the body and still retain its sensibility. The same Apostle, in one of the most weighty and striking passages of the New Testament, places the *spirits of just men made perfect* amongst the other spiritual and invisible members of the heavenly Jerusalem or invisible Church; such as the *living God, Jesus the Mediator,* and the *innumerable company of Angels.* Commentators in general, without any view to this argument, understand the *spirits* here mentioned as the souls of good men separated from the body: and the word τετελειωμενων may well be rendered, who have finished or perfected the course of this life.

This *Arabian* Philosophy was therefore no part of St. *Paul's* religion: and God forbid that it should have been; for then the confident hope expressed by himself, in common with all the other ancient and modern martyrs of the Church, who died in the faith

of Christ, and under the assurance of being present with him after death *, would have been a delusion, like that of the Turks, who die fighting for their absurdities and blasphemies, in hope of an immediate translation to a sensual Paradise.

I have here said nothing concerning the appearance of *Moses* and *Elias* in an intermediate state of Glory at the Transfiguration of Christ: because this, and many other facts and expressions of the Scripture, will offer themselves to those who consider the subject more at large †.

Ditton, in his book on *the Resurrection*, hath an Appendix on *Matter's thinking*, wherein he argues very solidly against the Materialists, a sort of Philosophers, to whom the *Arabianists* are very nearly related; the death of the Soul together with that of the body being a necessary consequence of Materialism; and it doth not appear to be consistent with any other principle. The Anabaptists were sensible of this, who, to prove their notion, affirmed that God made *every part* of man of the *dust of the Earth*. Men have generally concluded that the Substance of the Soul must be *spiritual* because it *thinks*; and that it must be *immortal* because it is *spiritual*. So far as the Scripture is concerned, this Author pronounces all the Advocates for the Sleep of the Soul to be either Deists or Sceptics; for which reason he doth not argue with them as *Christians*, but as an eccentric

* One *Wishart*, a good man, who suffered under Hen. VIII. had been charged with this heterodoxy, but affirmed it at the stake to be a slander, and that he was *assured his Soul should be immediately with his Saviour*. Collier's Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 206.

† See Bp. *Bull's* Sermon on Acts i. 25. and *View of the Times*, Vol. III. p. 250, &c. against Dr. *Coward*, who wrote largely on the mortality of the Soul, in 1707.

species of *Philosophers:* the matter, in his judgment, being too plain in the Scripture to admit of any dispute. Yet they who plead for this gloomy philosophy, are persuaded that nothing but the prejudice and bigotry of the age hinders it from being generally received: a persuasion as groundless as their philosophy itself.

Some *Arabians* are commonly supposed to have been the first amongst Christians who asserted the Soul's mortality: but it was certainly a member of that monstrous system, which came very early from the School of *Valentine;* because I find it very distinctly refuted by *Irenæus,* who has an excellent Chapter under this title—*Resurrectio nobis promissa ad spiritus naturaliter immortales referri non debet, sed ad corpora ex se mortalia.* Lib. v. c. 7

DISSERTATION III.

A

COMMENTARY

ON REV. XIV. 13.

IN WHICH THE NATURE OF DEATH IS FARTHER CONSIDERED.

THE power of Sin is too manifest from the universal corruption of the world; and the dominion of *Death* is the certain and visible effect of it.

These two articles made a great figure in the Religion of Heathenism; the ground of which (so far as it can be separated from *Tradition*) was little more than an experimental knowledge of Sin and Death.

In the primitive temptation, when the Devil moved us to eat of the forbidden fruit, he pronounced a *knowledge* of *good and evil* as a consequence of the act of disobedience.

As he was a Liar who made this promise, it is little to be wondered at, that one half of it hath fallen short. The knowledge of *good* (whether virtue or felicity be understood by it) is hidden from us: and the knowledge of *evil*, that is, of the evil of sin, and the evil of punishment, is all that is now left to us. Nothing is more common than for great Liars to make

great promises; because a promise, which is never to be made good, costs nothing. The Devil therefore, who has ends to serve upon us, is never wanting in promises; but whoever takes his word will find himself miserably disappointed in the end. By his performance in this first instance we may judge of him in every other: for though he can transform himself into all shapes, he will never be able to speak the truth under any one of them. To counteract the illusions of this evil Spirit, the New Testament brings with it a *voice from heaven*, assuring us that the *Dead are blessed**. Our first parents were persuaded by the voice of *Satan*, that an act of disobedience would turn a Man into a God; this voice informs us, that faith and obedience will turn *death* itself into a *Blessing*. Which two declarations differ as Truth and Error generally do. The former is flattering and plausible, and finds immediate credit: the latter appears strange and contradictory, and cannot be assented to, till many prejudices are overcome, many difficulties removed, and a deliberate enquiry patiently submitted to. Errors are as cheap and as thriving as weeds in the field; but Truth is the fruit of labour and self-denial. The different value of each is sure to be determined by their issues; but folly hath no patience, and therefore takes things according to their first appearance.

The blessedness of the dead is one of the Christian Paradoxes, which cannot be cleared up and justified without a patient investigation: for it must be granted, that Death, in its own nature, is not a *blessing* but a *curse*. When the Creator surveyed the works of his own hands, he pronounced them all to

* Rev. xiv. 13.

be *good;* and it is declared, upon another occasion, that *for his pleasure they are, and were created,* Rev. iv. Therefore it is not his pleasure that they should be destroyed. But Death is the destruction of man, the most excellent of the visible works of God; which destruction is as strong an evidence of the divine displeasure, as the creation of man was an instance of divine goodness. I think any person must be sensible of this, who compares an healthy living body with a dead corpse; in which the eyes, that were formed for seeing, are grown dim and sunk into the head; the hands and feet, that were made for action, are become stiff and motionless; the ear, wonderously framed to judge of sounds, now insensible of every impression; the heart, which never rested since it was created, now cold and silent as a mass of clay; the blood, which used to flow through the veins, and spread life and warmth to every part, now congealed and frozen up to the fountain-head; the head, the seat of sense and understanding, now ready to be filled with earth and worms. Let any person contemplate such a shocking spectacle as this, and He will be in little danger of error when He comes to argue and conclude upon it.

Hence death, in itself, can be considered only as an evil; indeed the greatest of temporal evils: all the lesser evils of pain and diseases lead to this, as the waters of springs and rivers fall at length into the sea.

Death is also a curse upon the mind as well as the body; it keeps men in a state of fear and dread, and consequently of subjection and servitude. The remembrance of it is a bitter ingredient, which poisons the comforts of human life. It is like those poisonous wild gourds, which, being shred amongst other wholesome herbs, rendered them all unfit for nourish-

ment. The heathen shewed the distress and bondage of mind, under which they laboured upon this account, by uttering the most doleful howlings and lamentations for their dead friends, cutting and mangling their flesh, and shaving their heads after a superstitious fashion. Even good men have been struck with anxiety and consternation at the prospect of approaching death. The pious *Hezekiah*, when visited by the prophet *Isaiah*, and forewarned of his end, *turned himself to the wall, and prayed, and wept sore.* Isaiah xxxviii. 2. The holy Psalmist likewise expressed the emotions he was sensible of in such words as these—*My heart is sore pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.* Psalm lv. 4, 5. Yea, Christ himself, who was the most perfect of all men, did yet, as a man, feel within himself these terrors of death, and prayed to the Father that the *cup might pass from him.*

But, besides all this, Death is a shame and disgrace to our nature; and that because it is a punishment. In the punishment, or rather persecution, of *the innocent*, there is no shame; but punishment, when it is the consequence of guiltiness, is shameful in the eyes of all mankind. There is something *hateful*, which the most compassionate beholder cannot abstract from the notion of a malefactor; for which reason such are separated from the society of men, and committed to the filth and darkness of a dungeon. Now the death of every man, though it may seem natural, is really neither more nor less than a judicial execution, because it is the penalty of disobedience. And as all sin is filthy and abominable in the eyes of God, death and pollution are so nearly related, that the old law pronounced every dead corpse unclean,

and not fit to be touched, without the subsequent ceremony of a formal purification by water. We know very well that this was designed as a moral lesson to purity of mind and manners. Notwithstanding which, there must have been also a sense and propriety in the letter of the law.

The ablutions of the heathens at their funerals had probably the same original, and the same meaning: at least with those who are wise enough to consider the sense of their own ceremonies. In the practice of *burning* their dead, they seem also to have been sensible, that the death of every man is *penal;* an effect of sin which they meant to *expiate*, and of divine wrath which they desired to *pacify*, by a religious offering of every dead corpse as a sacrifice to the infernal Deities. Their whole Ritual was in a manner made up of *expiations* *; and the ceremonies, which were superadded to the act of burning the dead, express such an intention plainly enough. This will account for a remarkable expression in *Virgil*, on occasion of the funeral of *Misenus:* for why should the pile be called an *altar*, unless the body was laid upon it in the way of a *sacrifice?*

—festinant flentes, ARAMque SEPULCHRI
Congerere arboribus, cœloque educere certant.
Æneid. vi. 177.

If all this be true, the question arises, how can death be a blessing? For the understanding of which, it must be considered, that what hath been here said relates to the death of the *natural man*, or child of

* See Alexand. ab Alex. lib. v. c. 27. This general thirsting after *expiation* may be sufficient of itself to justify that expression of the prophet concerning the *Messiah*, where he calls him the *desire of all nations*.

Adam. The death of a *Christian* is another thing: and to teach us this, the Scripture hath added "Blessed are the dead *from henceforth:*" that is, from the mediation of Jesus Christ, and the publication of his Gospel.

Death is not now a punishment, because it is not an instance of divine vengeance. As the penalty of sin, it was inflicted upon Christ, who offered himself a Sacrifice. Upon his head the iniquities of us all were laid; as the sins of the people, according to an institution of the Mosaic law, were ordered to be laid upon the head of the yearly Sacrifice. In his person they were required and visited by the divine wrath: and if his sacrifice was a satisfactory atonement, then it must follow, in the words of the Apostle, that *there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* Their death is not a banishment of the Spirit from the divine presence, but a returning of it to God that gave it. That door, which seems to shut them out of life, and separate them from the living, admits them into the society of the Father of Spirits. Therefore,

2. Death is no longer a *reproach* to us. All the Shame, that could possibly attend it, Christ took upon himself, that it might no longer be any disgrace to his disciples. He was *numbered with transgressors,* and was content to die the death of a *Malefactor.* He bore the shame as well as the pain of the Cross. And thus by the ignominy of his death, and the righteousness of the person who endured it, our death is made holy. His death was infamous in the sight of the world, that ours might be acceptable in the sight of God. In a word, he submitted to such a death as was pronounced to be *cursed* in its kind, that our death might be *blessed.*

As to the impression of the terrors of death upon the imagination, he suffered all the horrors of mind the wrath of God could raise within him, during his bloody sweat in the Garden, that he might be *touched with the feeling of our infirmities.* From this his experience we have an assurance, that he knows how to succour us under the like trial: and may every faithful Christian, in his last hour, find the refreshment which those sorrows purchased for him!

Neither is death now to be regarded as a destroying of the works of God; because the future Regeneration of the body is ascertained by the fact of our Redeemer's Resurrection. He who was the first-born from the dead, an heir of life in his own right, hath secured the same right of inheritance to all the partakers of that nature in which, and with which, he entered upon his glory.

When any man is taking down a building, we do not look upon this as the act of a destroyer, if the design is to erect a better building upon the old foundations. This, God be thanked, is the gracious purpose of our dissolution. The weakness of death leads to the power of the resurrection; corruption is the way to incorruption, mortality to immortality, dishonour to glory. *We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

But now we are to observe it, as a main article of our present subject, that this blessedness of death is not general to all mankind, though the Christian redemption is all-sufficient and universal in its nature. It is not said absolutely—*blessed are the dead;* but *blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.* A Christian life, then, is the only introduction to a blessed

death. Without that, no hope nor encouragement can be gathered from any passage of the Scripture. To *die in the Lord*, signifies 1. to die a member of his mystical body by baptism. Upon which consideration we are persuaded, that infants, being baptised, and dying in the state of infancy, are translated to the kingdom of heaven; as certainly as the infants of the *Israelitish* people were carried over *Jordan* into *Canaan* (a figure of heaven) without any preparatory trial in the wilderness.

If they live and grow up, the conditions of salvation change as their capacities change; insomuch that the same baptism, which is sufficient to save an infant, is sufficient only to condemn those who might, but never do, get any farther. As the Christian advances in life, there must be other evidences of his spiritual union with Christ: for as by baptism he is born to a new state; so by faith, by a partaking of the other sacrament, by prayer, and by a godly life, it must appear that he liveth in him unto whom he was born again; leading the *rest of his life according to that beginning* of it, at which he renounced the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.

For 1. it is written, *the just shall live* by faith: whence the great end the Apostle aimed at was to *win Christ*, and be *found in him, not having* his *own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God* by faith.

Then, 2. it is necessary that our union with Christ should be confirmed by the other sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*; for without this, he himself hath pronounced, that we *have no life in us*. But this cannot be true, unless the man, who wilfully neglects the communion, may thereby lose what he gained in his baptism.

Prayer is another sign of our abiding in Christ. Where the Spirit of adoption is, it will be employed in supplication to God, who, as a father, bestoweth gifts upon his children that ask him. If a man lives, he breathes: And if the Christian lives by the Spirit of God, the breath of prayer will be a never failing sign of it. Whence it is rightly declared, that *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:* he is disowned, as a *dead man*, who is no longer reckoned a member of society.

And lastly, an *holy conversation* in godliness and honesty must insure the privileges of our Christian membership. We must be like our Master in temper and behaviour; acting with the simplicity of the sheep, instead of that worldly disposition, which is best expressed by the deceit and subtlety of the Fox. *If any man is in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature:* he hath put off the old man, with his pride, and his malice, and his covetousness, and hath put on the new man. The image of God is restored in him; *for he is created after God* (that is, according to that image of God which *Adam* lost) *in righteousness and true holiness.* Again, St. *John* saith, *He that abideth in him ought so to walk as he also walked:* which is agreeable to Christ's own declaration—*He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.* From all which this short inference naturally occurs, that to live fruitless, is to die hopeless.

If we examine this matter more attentively, it will appear, that the *blessedness* of those, *who die in the Lord*, is said to consist chiefly in these two particulars.

1. That they *rest from their labours.*
2. That *their works do follow them.* St. *Peter* in-

structs us that we are all *strangers* and *pilgrims* in this world: and what doth the traveller hope for but *rest* at the end of his Journey? The life of man is represented to us in a very particular manner by the adventures of the Israelites in their passage from *Egypt* to *Canaan*. Till it pleased God to look upon their condition, they laboured under a state of cruel bondage, in the service of a merciless and atheistical Tyrant, whose chief delight it was to harass and oppress them. Under a like tyranny every man is born; and would continue in it for ever, if the same God, who brought his people over the Red Sea, did not vouchsafe to translate him from the dominion of Satan, by conducting him through the waters of baptism. When the people had passed safe over the sea, and were encamped in the wilderness, how many temptations, difficulties and dangers had they to struggle with, under the exercise of which, they wandered about for forty years? In like manner is the life of a Christian full of labour and trouble. He is assaulted with divers lusts and passions which war against the soul. If he hath any concern for the glory of God and the salvation of men, the overflowings of ungodliness must of course harass and vex him, so as to render his situation like that of *Lot* in *Sodom*. If he lives long, infirmities and sorrows bend him down every year nearer to the earth out of which he was taken. The primitive Christians, besides their ordinary labours of temptation, sorrow, and infirmity, were exercised with the sharper and bloody trials of persecution; flying from city to city, to avoid the rage of blinded Jews and blood-thirsty heathens. From all these troubles death set them free; whence, as it was observed in the preceding

Dissertation, they called their death an *Exodus* *: no other word could so aptly express their happy translation from labour to rest, and from bondage to liberty. How glad were the Israelites, when they saw the fruitful hills and vales of the promised land stretching away before their view on the other side of Jordan, when all the trials of the wilderness were past, and their tedious journeyings and encampments brought to a conclusion? How glad was *Lot*, when he had escaped from the execrable *Sodom*, and found a peaceful refuge in *Zoar*? How happy is the Merchant, who having been tossed upon the waves of the sea, and in danger of shipwreck, finds himself at last safe in the port? So happy is the soul, which hath taken its flight from these regions of sin and sorrow; which having *died in the Lord*, is admitted to the enjoyment of light and peace in that intermediate state of Paradise, to which Christ himself departed while his body lay in the grave; and where the Saints both of the old and new Dispensation rest in the *bosom of Abraham*; expecting that great day, when those gates of heaven shall again be opened, through which the King of Glory entered after his ascension from the earth. What man, who considers the labours of this life, and dares look forward to that *rest which remaineth for the people of God*, what man, I say, can refrain from wishing, in those words of the Psalmist—*Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away, and be at rest!*

But, God knoweth, all men are not in a condition to utter such a wish as this, being discouraged by that second consideration—*their works do follow them.*

* So St. Peter calls it, Ep. II. c. i. 15. on which *Grotius* remarks —*hic* exitus *figuratus per illum ex Ægypto.*

In this consists the blessedness of those who *die in the Lord*, that none of their good works will be lost or forgotten in the sight of God. The tears of their repentance, their prayers and devotions, their patient suffering for the truth's sake, their deeds of mercy and charity, all these things are now noted in the book of God, and shall hereafter be remembered. Then will they have honour, whom the world despised; Angels will celebrate the acts of those conquerors in the cause of God and of righteousness, whose lives the fools accounted as madness.

Every difficulty, which now meets us when we consider the lot of a righteous man, will then be cleared up. If he hath served God in a low estate here, he shall then be held in honour. If he hath promoted peace upon earth, and met with nothing but hatred for his good will, he shall then be owned amongst the children of God. If he hath delighted in works of mercy, and received nothing here in return for them, he shall then receive, what all the powers upon earth cannot bestow, even the *forgiveness of his sins*; and having shewed mercy, shall find mercy at the hands of God. If he hath suffered shame, loss, or persecution of any kind, for righteousness' sake, the kingdom of heaven, which God will permit him to claim as his own, will infinitely more than balance the account. Therefore, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.*

The Church being like that net, which was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind both good and bad; this Essay may fall into the hands of very different readers, some of whom are in the way to those blessings which the Saviour of the world hath

in store for them, and whose *works*, through his *merits*, will justify them in the great day of retribution. There are others, whom Death, whenever it shall come, is not like to translate to the region of the blessed, and whose *works will follow them*, only to bring them into everlasting confusion. The drunkard may now vaunt himself, and scoff at the terrors of death and judgment. If his profane jests, and all the horrible oaths that are intermixed with them, were written down upon paper, and repeated in public before his face, he would be abashed, if his sober reason and senses were about him. What will be his confusion then, when all his expressions, from the heaviest of his blasphemies down to the lightest of his idle words, shall be exposed before men and angels? How will blasphemy appear, should it be rehearsed in the ears of a sinner, and confronted with the tremendous Majesty of the Almighty, seated upon the clouds of heaven, with darkness under his feet, the noise of thunder rolling through the skies, and flames of lightning flashing round about him? No man should be so weak as to imagine, that I am dressing up this sight, to make it terrible: for all the words we can bring together will never describe one half of the terrors of divine vengeance, or paint the amazement of those, to whom conviction shall come when the day of repentance is gone. Now then let them consider, that they have an account to give; that their most secret actions are noted, yea, and the very thoughts of their hearts registered in heaven. Now let the covetous remember, that all the unjust gain he hath been heaping up will be left behind him; while the deceit and oppression, with which he got it, will follow him into his grave, and stick close to his dust, and rise again to meet him in the day of

judgment. Cursing, swearing, lying, cheating, debauchery and drunkenness, are now looked upon as the several ingredients of mirth and jollity; but what will they be then? For if any man accepts of such company in this world, it will follow him into the world of Spirits, and cry after him for vengeance.

Thrice happy then is he, who, in the days of his health and strength, before the evil days of age and weakness have overtaken him, hears that celestial *voice* of the Evangelist, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,* &c. daily sounding in his ears, stirring him up to farther degrees of faith and devotion, and keeping him ever mindful of that last great Account, which can be rendered supportable by nothing but a timely preparation.

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

LIFE DEATH, AND BURIAL

OF THE

PATRIARCHS.

REFLECTIONS,

&c.

I. No man can make a right use of the life which God has given him, unless he understands the nature of it. There is a general mistake among mankind, to which we all are witnesses, and yet are in danger of falling into it every day: and when it hath once got possession of us, our own strength is not sufficient to cast it out. This life is no more than a passage or journey, yet we take it as a settlement; and when we have taken it for such, we use it as such: we use it as what it is not, and consequently we *abuse* it. This abuse must lead us to misery and ruin; for no man can find his happiness in contradicting the will of God. The Scripture assures us, that God willeth not the death of any sinner; and it is equally certain, on the same principles of his mercy and goodness, that he takes no pleasure in the distress and disappointment of any of his creatures. According to our own narrow and selfish sentiments, he ought to give us such things as are most desirable and pleasant in themselves: but instead of these, he gives us what is best for us under our present circumstances; because he looks farther than our own limited powers and disordered passions will suffer us to do. Our

happiness is an object as desirable to our Maker as it is to ourselves: but we are too much in haste to judge rightly about it: we mistake our road, through an unhappy persuasion, that it is very easy to be found; that nature will direct us to it, as it does the brutes: but God treats us like what we are, rational men; and therefore gives us, not what is absolutely best in our present state, as being most pleasant, but what is best, when all our views and interests are considered together. We choose many things, not for the sake of themselves but of their consequences: and shall we think that rule inconsistent either with the justice or wisdom of God, which common prudence obliges us to follow on many occasions?

II. They who have desired to make a right use of their life, have wisely considered it as a *journey:* from which the following considerations naturally arise. That as every journey is undertaken for the sake of its end, common reason requires that it should be *a progress;* that no time should be thrown away in unnecessary excursions, for the sake of such objects as have no relation to the purpose we are upon. A man upon a journey ought to be satisfied, and every reasonable person is satisfied, if he does not find all things as regular and convenient as in his own dwelling: if there is less sunshine than he could wish for while he is travelling; if his meat is less pleasant and his rest less quiet than at home: for he that enters upon a journey exposes himself of course to such inconveniences, and is not surprised if he meets with them. All these things serve to endear his own habitation, and make him in haste to accomplish his business, that he may have some right to enjoy it at his return.

III. Others have considered human life as a state

of banishment: and this representation of it will take away much of our eagerness after its enjoyments. If the mind is tender and sensible, it will take but little pleasure in the possession of those things, with which it would be highly entertained, if it were at peace in its native land. While it is sighing for what is distant, it can have no relish for what is present. When the children of Israel were led away into captivity, and spent their days by the waters of Babylon and the trees that adorned their banks; others might have been delighted with the prospect, but *they* could only *sit down and weep.* The remembrance of Sion was always uppermost in their minds: so that while their Assyrian companions were full of mirth and music, probably on some occasion of public rejoicing, on some religious festival, and required them to join in it with one of the songs of their own country, they could only reflect with sorrow and bitterness, how improper it was to join with idolaters in their worship, to intermix *melody* with their *heaviness,* and *to sing the Lord's song in a strange land;* that song, with which their hearts had been delighted, while their eyes were also dazzled with the splendors of their own Temple, and their Nation happy in that favour of God, which they knew not how to value till they had lost it.

IV. But if we remember that Death is the penalty of disobedience, Life will appear to us under a still farther disadvantage; and our passage through it will be the journey of a condemned criminal from the jail to the gibbet. When a man is taken out of prison, and led forth to his execution, though he may be carried to it by the farthest way, the terrors of his mind are not lessened by so inconsiderable a relief; the fatal spot is present to his imagination from the first to the last step of his journey.

Though his limbs are in their full strength, his eyesight perfect, his respiration sound, his appetite good; yet this one consideration takes up all his attention, that he is upon the road to his Death. If we were to hear a person under these circumstances talking about indifferent subjects, or laughing and jesting; or if we should see him anxious about the colour of his clothes, or attempting to drown his senses in strong liquor; we should be shocked at the impropriety, and lament that the poor infatuated wretch was so insensible of his condition. Our conduct would surely be better than it is on many occasions, and our appetite for dissipation would be checked, if we had the sense to remember daily that this is our own case! that Life is the road to Death, and that every step we take brings us nearer to it: that our vanity and attention to pleasure, is so far from being an argument of our sense and spirit, that it is in fact a strong proof of our stupidity; that it is all no better than the amusement of a condemned criminal forgetful of his execution. This may pass for a gloomy consideration, a sort of doctrine which will hardly be received: it disagrees so much with the passions and prejudices of men, that we are apt to reject it with scorn, as invective and not representation. Such is the way of the world! there hath always been too much room for that reflection of Moses—*Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!*

V. The wisdom of God saw how necessary it was to keep his servants attentive to the condition of their tenure here upon earth; and therefore his providence threw them into an unsettled way of life, whence they might with certainty collect, that this world was not to be the object of their affections; that

earthly happiness was not proposed to them as the reward of their faith, and that they ought to look forward to another Life for the proper place of their abode. The greatest favourites of heaven, were of all men the greatest strangers upon earth; and the Scripture holds out their examples to us, that we may prepare ourselves to be followers of them *who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* The promise of an inheritance was first offered to Abraham: but no sooner had he received this promise, than he was called away from his country and his kindred, trusting to the word of God for a land afterwards to be revealed to him. When God had conducted him to the land of Promise, the Apostle (in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews) tells us, he sojourned in it as in a strange country (a place which did not belong to him,) dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked *for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

Of the land promised to him as an inheritance, he had actually no possession: not enough to set his foot upon, that he could call his own; insomuch that he was under the necessity of purchasing a burying-ground for a sum of money of *Emmor* the father of *Sychem.* We read in the book of *Genesis,* that *his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Macpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth; there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.* These circumstances, so exactly related, may seem to be scarcely worth a place in the Bible; but we learn from them this important truth, that Abraham, the father of the church, a man distinguished from all other men as the friend

of God, the first elected heir of all his promises, was a pilgrim upon earth, and died without receiving any possession in it, more than a small spot to be occupied at his Death. Then at last did he begin to take possession of it: to teach all his children, that the *righteous hath hope in his Death*, and that this world is not worth their enjoyment: if it had been such, God would have given it to Abraham.

VI. The Patriarch Jacob, who shall be the subject of our present meditation, was conformed, in his way of life, to the example of his forefather. In his youth he fled from his brother, and served many years as an hireling under a hard master. When he wanted a spot of ground to erect an altar upon, he purchased it, as Abraham had done before him. He was the heir of the promised land, yet lived only as a *stranger* there so long as he dwelt in it: and at a time of his life, when his grey hairs were nearly brought down to the grave with sorrow, he *went down into Egypt*. When he was introduced to Pharaoh, the king enquired after his age: and the answer he makes to this question is worth our attention—*The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage*. If we had beheld the figure of this venerable old man when he was brought before the king, and had heard his words, we should have thought his advice worth listening to: let us think it so now, and weigh it accordingly—*Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been*—He had lived an hundred and thirty years; and does he call these but *few?* To us who look forward upon such a space of time, it may appear *long*; but to him who looked back upon it, it was

short. Take the oldest man you can meet with, and ask him whether his life seems to have been short? I dare promise you what his answer will be. And if you were to ask him also, whether it seems to have been vain and empty? here again we may judge what his answer would be, unless his head too should be empty: for every wise man, after he hath tried human life, hath reason to pronounce, as Jacob did, that the days of it have been *evil:* as to *Jacob* himself, the case is plain to those who consider his history. He was twenty years in the service of the hard-hearted *Laban,* his kinsman. *In the day the drought consumed him, and the frost by night; and his sleep departed from his eyes.* His mind was agitated with the terrors of Death when he was about to meet his savage brother *Esau,* and his body was maimed in a mysterious struggle with an angel. In after time, he was afflicted by the unnatural offence of *Reuben;* disgraced by the cruelty of *Simeon* and *Levi;* wounded to the heart by the untimely death of his favourite Rachel in the midst of a journey; bereaved of his comfort afterwards by the supposed loss of his beloved *Joseph;* terrified with the apprehension of losing Benjamin; distressed by a famine, and called away at an hundred and thirty years of age to a strange country, when he was rather wishing to be released from the burthen of life. Surely we must allow that the days of this man were evil. He calls them the days of his *pilgrimage,* and with great propriety; for he was never settled any where till his Death. In the last stage of his life, he lived in a state of dependence on one of his sons, to whom he owed the very bread that he eat. It is said, that *Joseph nourished his father and his brethren, and all his father's household with bread, according to their families.* In Egypt, a strange and

idolatrous country, he died; and the journey of his funeral at last concluded his pilgrimage: *he was carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money.*

VII. Such was the Life, Death, and Burial of this holy Patriarch. In his Life he was a distressed wanderer, at his Death an alien, and a pilgrim even in his Burial. What shall we say to these things? was this man forsaken of God? certainly not: for every step of his Life was under the special direction of an extraordinary providence. He died without receiving the inheritance which had been promised to him. Did the promise therefore fail? we have an answer to this question from the Apostle, who assures us, that this same Jacob, with the other Patriarchs, *died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* They knew the promise of God was secured to them, and signified their hope in it by the manner and place of their burial; so that being dead they yet spake of it, and their holy example is speaking to us at this day. When Jacob was about to die, he took a solemn oath of his son Joseph, that he would not bury him in *Egypt*, but carry him out of Egypt, to lie with his fathers in *their burying-place. Joseph,* in like manner, before his Death, *gave commandment concerning his bones,* that the children of Israel at their departure should carry them up from Egypt, and bury them in Canaan. What could make these men so anxious about the place of their Burial? this world is lost to a dead man: and if his body must be turned to dust, what difference could it make whether that happened in *Egypt* or in *Canaan?* what could they express by

this ceremony of their Burial, but that they still depended upon the promise of God, and were fully persuaded that even Death itself could not cut them off from the enjoyment of it? To signify this hope, their bodies were translated from the house of bondage to the land of promise. The place of their Burial is a testimony of their faith, which shall last till the day of their resurrection. When the last trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be summoned from every quarter of the earth, where shall the angels of heaven gather up the bodies of these men, but in that land, where they knew their Redeemer would be manifested in the latter days; and to which he shall return, when the last enemy of his church shall be put under his feet? Animated with this hope, they were enabled to bear all the changes of human life: they were contented to live as strangers in a land, of which they had a grant from heaven itself: when they were absent from it, they had no desire of returning to it in their life-time: all they wanted, was a small spot of ground, wherein to express, by their Burial, their contempt of the world, and their hope of a resurrection. There they were all buried; and there they lie unto this day, expecting the time when God shall visit them; and their bones so deposited by an act of faith, shall flourish again out of the dust.

VIII. Thus much being said on the Life, Death, and Burial of Jacob, let us consider what we are to learn from his example.

As we are the spiritual children of *Jacob*, and the heirs of his faith; it may be expected, that God will treat us also as strangers upon earth; that he will lead us through many changes, and teach us, by fre-

quent interruptions, that this world and its happiness are not the proper objects of our desires.

This lesson is as needful for us as for our forefathers; and though the almighty hand of God may not be so visible and open in the conduct of *our* lives as of theirs, yet his agency may be as real in the one case as in the other. And it will be our duty to resign ourselves, as they did, to his disposal. Shall we account it an hardship, if Providence shall at last convince us, that the favour of God is more valuable than the praises of men? that the improvement of the spirit is preferable to the gratification of the flesh? that the salvation of the soul is better than the health of the body? that Glory in Heaven is more desirable than enjoyment upon earth? If we are persuaded of these things, we shall gain more than the whole world can bestow upon us, and lose nothing but shadows and visions which cheat us with imaginary forms, and fly from us while we endeavour to secure them. If death finds us possessed of our errors, and bereaves us of them against our will, he will plant sorrow and remorse in the place of them. If we humble ourselves under the hand of God, and part with them freely, peace and hope will immediately succeed them; and they are the only blessings, of which we cannot be deprived either by the uncertainty of life, or the certainty of death. We cannot pronounce upon any man's happiness till we see the end of him: his death is the index to his life. We count *Jacob* happy, notwithstanding all the travail and sorrow of his life, because he never forsook God, nor was ever forsaken by him. If we would be like him in our latter end, we must follow the example of his faith while we are alive. We must depend upon the pro-

mises of God, as he did; and regard this world only as a passage to a better. Let us examine our own hearts then, and see what account we can give of ourselves.

IX. Do we witness the same good confession? that our present life is no better than a pilgrimage? that the days of it are few and evil? that therefore, laying aside our confidence in things present, we ought to place our hope and our affections on things to come? Do we not rather declare by our actions, that we have chosen things temporal instead of things eternal? that this world is to be used, as if it were to last for ever? that the one thing needful is the improvement of our estates; and the one thing excellent the enjoyment of them? Are not these the principles by which men (I had almost said *Christians)* are now directed? why else do we see them hunting so eagerly after pleasure, grasping at wealth, or soliciting honour? When our Saviour preached against worldly wisdom, the Pharisees *derided him* because they were covetous: this worldly Spirit had got possession of them, and soon turned them into complete infidels. That *gain is Godliness,* is now the ruling principle of the whole generation of Jews, and they stick at nothing to promote it. If the spiritual sons of Abraham are influenced by the same principle as the natural, they may call themselves *Christians,* but they will be so like Jews that we shall scarcely know the difference; and *their uncircumcision will be counted for circumcision,* in a sense quite opposite to that of the Apostle. What comfort can such men receive from the prospect of an heavenly *Canaan?* What relief can they find under any of the troubles of life? What pleasure can they take, in meditating upon death? The whole subject is to them no better than a *death's-*

head, placed in the way only to spoil their mirth, and interrupt their prosperity—Therefore they drown the remembrance of it, and fly for refuge to desperation itself; betaking them to that maxim of the Atheist —*Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*

The faith of Jacob inverted this Proverb, He reasoned thus—If to-morrow we die, it is not worth our while to make provision for the flesh; nor to run the hazard of eternal damnation for the momentary enjoyment of sin. He could find pleasure in meditating upon death. Out of that well, dark and deep as it may appear, his faith could at all times draw up the waters of life. The nearer Death approached to him, so much the more did the prospect brighten before him: and at the last, we behold him departing in peace, with prayers and blessings in his mouth. We see his body translated by an act of faith, at his own pious request, to be laid with his fathers in the sepulchre of Abraham, and there resting from its labours, till it shall be summoned to enter into the joy of its Lord.

X. Here let us stop awhile, and imagine to ourselves that we stand in the field of *Sichem*, looking at the cave of *Macpelah*, and reflecting on the holy family buried within it.

That the days of their pilgrimage are passed away as a vision; themselves turned to dust, with nothing now before them but a spiritual and eternal world! I am sure we shall not think the worse of them, because their condition here was unsettled, and they were led about by the hand of God as strangers in the earth. The only way to form a true judgment of any man's condition taken altogether, is to think upon him a little when he is laid in his grave. While he is alive we are cheated with a false opinion of him: our eyes

are smitten with the splendor of his greatness, or our pride disgusted by the poverty of his appearance. But in Death, there is an end of all delusion: and though we may find ourselves disposed to flatter those who have the most of this world (however they come by it), yet we shall generally agree in praising the dead who were *rich in faith;* like those who were buried with *faithful Abraham.* From them let us turn our eyes to ourselves. Our life is a pilgrimage like theirs: the days of it will soon be passed away, and nothing remain for us but things eternal. While our mind is thus intent upon our mortality, and the next world open to our view, it will be natural to cry out, as *Balaam* did, when he saw the camp of Israel, in which were the bones of Joseph travelling over to Canaan; *O let me die the Death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!* But let us consider, that if we would *die the Death of the righteous,* we must lead the Life of the righteous: there is no other way. If we follow their faith, it will lead us to the same end; and though we are not buried in the same spot of ground, we shall rest in the same hope. The whole earth, or any spot of it, is a sepulchre which will safely preserve the Christian against the day of visitation. It has been purchased, not with a sum of money paid by Abraham or Jacob, but with the price of Christ's innocent blood; and hath this resemblance to that cave of Abraham, and that potter's field spoken of in the history of our Saviour's passion, that it *is a place to bury strangers in.* So that although the ground was cursed for the sin of man, yet through the merits of Christ's Death, this privilege is reserved to the Christian, that he possesses it as a resting-place, a *bed* wherein the saints may rejoice in hope of glory: and the earth will last

no longer, than till it hath performed the office, first of *keeping*, then of *delivering up its dead:* a doctrine, which as it gives us a comfortable prospect of Death, so it yields us an admirable lesson while we are alive; teaching us not to throw away too much of our regard upon a world, whose best use and highest honour it is to answer the end of a *sepulchre*.

A

DISQUISITION

CONCERNING THE

METAPHORICAL USAGE

AND

APPLICATION OF SLEEP

IN THE

SCRIPTURES.

A

DISQUISITION,

&c.

1. It hath been universally allowed, that there is a natural resemblance between Sleep and Death. The Roman orator observes, that Sleep is *the image and figure of Death* *; and one of their poets, lamenting a friend who died in his youth, complains that *a perpetual Sleep* † had seized upon him. *Stobæus*, in his Moral Collections, tells us of one, who when he lay in a drowsy state upon his death-bed, and was asked by a friend how he did, made answer, "*Sleep* is going to deliver me up to his *brother* ‡."

But the relation between Sleep and Death must needs have been very imperfectly traced by those, who could view the subject only on the darker side. The *Egyptians* indeed seem to have applied the dormant state of some insects to the survival of the soul after the death of the body; and the allusion, if I understand it rightly, was ingenious and elegant;

* *Cic. Tusc.* I. 38.

† *Ergo Quintilium perpetuus sopor urget.* Hor. Od. I. 24.

‡ Stob. Ecl. περι θανατου.

though I have met with no authority whereby it might be shewn how far they carried it.

II. The transformation of the several species of Caterpillars, through their intermediate state of sleep to that of their splendid investiture in the spring, when they come forth from their winter-quarters in the condition of flies, is a fact well known to every observer of nature. It is worthy of admiration, that a creature, still preserving its identity, should pass from the baseness of the worm to the agility of a bird; one while crawling upon the ground, and presently traversing the air in a form which is dazzling to the eyes. But it is yet more remarkable, that, in the interval before this change is brought to pass, there should be a middle state of Sleep, in which the bodily powers are suspended, while a principle of animation is continued. It is thought the Egyptians had an eye to this middle state and the change which follows it, in the configuration of their Mummies. The Caterpillar of the Silkworm-moth, and of many other like insects, passes into an *Eruca* or *Chrysalis* *, which is swathed about the body and filleted about the upper parts so exactly after the fashion of the bodies anciently embalmed in Egypt, that the resemblance could not be accidental. There is no natural similitude in the lineaments betwixt a Man and an Eruca; but the art of the Egyptians effected a very striking one: and they must have been strange philosophers if their art fell to work so uniformly without any design. The sages of that country, who expressed all their notions by symbols, acted agreeable to the plan of their whole system, when they signified the transmigration of the human soul by the transformation of an insect.

* These are the terms used by *Pliny*. Lib. xi. cap. 32.

A Christian, instructed in the doctrine of the resurrection, may make a much better use of the figure and complete the parallel in a satisfactory manner *: but the Egyptian philosopher could apply it only to his fanciful doctrine of the *metempsychosis*: and to this it could not be accommodated without violence: for the change of the *Eruca* into a feathered fly, is not a transfusion of the same life into a different substance, but an actual regeneration of the same body into a more glorious shape.

III. Natural history hath some other appearances nearly related to this and equally unaccountable; but our design at present is to consider the figurative acceptation of Sleep in the Scripture; which is consistent with itself, and delivers such doctrines as are more worthy of our attention, and more agreeable to the order of nature, than the fables of *Egypt*.

IV. When our blessed Saviour went into the house of the ruler of the Synagogue, with the design of raising up his daughter to life, he said to those who were assembled on the occasion, "Why make ye this "ado and weep, the damsel is not dead but sleepeth †." The people who were present, taking his words in the literal sense *laughed him to scorn*. Their laughter proceeded, as laughter generally doth, from a consciousness of superior knowledge: but the scorn was to themselves; for they laughed only because they were not wise enough to comprehend the meaning of his language. Neither was it much better understood by his own disciples, though it was received with more decency. The death of *Lazarus* gave him an oppor-

* This is elegantly done by the author of *Deism revealed*, in a work intitled *Truth in a Mask*. See *Allusion* the first.

† Mark v. 39.

tumity of using the same expression; "Our friend *La-*
"*zarus* sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out
"of Sleep *." Nothing can be plainer than that Christ, by the *Sleep* of Lazarus, signified his *Death;* and by his *awaking*, his resurrection which was shortly to follow. How mean and irrational was it to imagine, that the Saviour of the world should solemnly enter upon a dangerous journey (for such it was) only to disturb a sick friend in that Sleep, which might contribute much to his recovery! Yet such was the mistake of his disciples: they answered, "Lord, if he "sleep he shall do well; thinking that he spake of tak-
"ing rest in Sleep." They had been habituated, as Jews, to rest in the bare literal sense of the Scripture, and therefore listened to the discourses of their master with Jewish prejudice and ignorance. When he delivered to them that figurative admonition, "Be-
"ware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the "Sadducees," we find them applying it to the insignificant occasion of their own improvidence, because they had omitted to lay in a proper store of bread. On which occasion he thus appealed to them; "O ye "of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves be-
"cause ye have brought no bread?——how is it, that "ye do not yet understand, that I spake it not to "you concerning bread, that ye should beware of "the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Saddu-
"cees †?" Their error being corrected, and their attention excited by this rebuke, they discovered at length, that *leaven* signified *false doctrine*. The same persons, who were thus slow of apprehension, had received ocular demonstration, that a divine power was present with Christ to supply all their necessities.

* John xi. 11. † Matth. xvi. 11.

They had seen a few loaves of bread, by passing through his hands, become sufficient to feed a vast multitude in the wilderness. But they had either forgot the miracle, or knew not how to apply the remembrance of it. Their *faith* had forsaken them, and therefore their senses were deficient; for faith would have instructed them, that the literal sense of the expression was mean in itself, and injurious to the speaker; and thence they might have collected, that the leaven of the Pharisees, against which they had frequently been cautioned in plainer language, was that hypocrisy and pride which had inflated that class of men with error, and spoiled the whole mass of their doctrines.

V. When the death of *Lazarus* was spoken of under a like figure, the expression was misunderstood for want of a proper degree of faith in the hearers. It is observed of the inhabitants of the East, that they were accustomed from time immemorial to figurative and elevated language, even in their common discourse. This might be true: yet there were cases, in which this practice, however common, gave very little help to the understanding. The reception which the discourses of Christ so frequently met with from those of his own time, is sufficient to convince us, that when the figures of his speech were pointed toward spiritual and invisible objects, a principle of faith was wanting; without which the men of Palestine were no better prepared to discern his meaning, than if they had been born under the frigid zone. So that this instance of slowness of apprehension in the disciples might have been rebuked, (as that other was) in such words as these; "O ye of "little faith; how is it that ye do not understand, "that I spake it not of Sleep but of Death; since

" all shall awake in the morning of the resurrection? " The dead do not perish; they only fall asleep; and " as the Sleep of the night delivers men up to the " light of the succeeding day, so the rest of Death " is but a prelude to immortality." The expression ought not to have been unintelligible nor even strange to those, who had been accustomed to the language of the Scriptures; where it was said of *David*, of *Solomon*, and of other kings of Israel, that when they died they *slept* with their fathers. The prophet *Daniel* had warned them, that they who " *sleep* in " the dust of the earth shall *awake*, some to everlasting " life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt *." Such was the style of the Old Testament: and being so agreeable to the nature of things, it is adopted and used more familiarly by the writers in the New Testament. St. Paul speaks of departed Christians, as of those who *sleep in Jesus* †; and where he enlarges on the great topic of the resurrection, he describes our Redeemer to us as the *first fruits of them that slept* ‡; opening it as a new mystery, that *we shall not all sleep*; that is, we shall not all die, or be laid in the grave; inasmuch as many shall be alive at the Lord's coming, and undergo that blessed change instantaneously, the usual passage to which is through the dark valley and shadow of Death.

The general design of the foregoing expressions being too plain to be farther insisted upon, we must now consider the propriety with which they are applied to the subjects of Death and the resurrection: in doing which, I shall follow the steps of a learned writer of the last century; departing from his plan

* Dan. xii 2. † 1 Thess. iv. 14.
‡ 1 Cor. xv. 20.

occasionally, where it seems to be capable of improvement.

VI. When Sleep and Death are compared, the likeness holds through every member of the subject, and is agreeable to the soundest doctrines of the Scripture, in which every mind that is well informed and not ill disposed, would wish to be confirmed.

In Sleep, the senses of the body are under a temporary suspension; the ear heareth not, the eye seeth not; and the whole body is in appearance so lifeless, that is has been doubtful to a spectator in many instances, whether a person were asleep or dead.

But then, in the case of natural rest, it is not the whole man, it is only the earthly part that falleth asleep: the mind is generally then most active and awake. It has a faculty of transporting itself to the most remote places in a moment; can be present with those whose absence it lamented in the day-time; and being as it were taken out of the body into the world of spirits, it can converse in imagination with those who have long since departed from this world, without being sensible that they are numbered among the dead. It is observed by most men, that in the time of Sleep they can think with more freedom, reason with more clearness, compose with greater readiness, and deliver themselves, upon any subject they are acquainted with, without that embarrassment to which the mind is subject, when it is weighed towards the earth by its attendance upon the functions of the body.

Thus also in the other Sleep of Death, the whole man dies not. The body indeed is dead because of sin, but the soul, which according to the promise of Christ can *never die* *, is more free and active than

* See John xi. 25, 26.

when it is present in the flesh. From that plain and positive assurance given to the penitent thief—*this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*—thus much may certainly be inferred, that the souls of the faithful when disengaged from the body, are admitted to a region of felicity, (for such was *Paradise;*) that they are nearer to God the fountain of life than while they are in this earthly state; and also as others are members of the same society, that they are in the company of the blessed, who with *Abraham, Isaac,* and *Jacob live unto God;* particularly, that being *absent from the body, they are present with the Lord,* whom a cloud too thick for a mortal eye to penetrate, hath received out of the sight of the living.

VII. When a man sleeps, it is a matter of indifference whether he is in a palace or a prison. His mind receives no comfort from the magnificence which surrounds his body, neither can it be confined by the walls and bars of a dungeon. If he is rich, he has then no confidence in his wealth; and if he is poor, he suffers nothing from his poverty. The case is the same with him in the Sleep of Death. He may be lodged under a tomb on which the sculptor hath exerted the utmost of his skill, in adorning it with trophies, and inscribing it with titles of honour; yet he is insensible of all these distinctions, which can serve only to feed the vanity of the living. On the other hand, it may be his lot to rest in a common grave covered with a turf, and that turf may be overgrown with the vilest weeds, yet these are defects which will give him no disquiet. The pomp of life may attempt to follow us into the grave; but poverty and riches must part with us at the edge of it, and deliver us all to a state of parity, where, "The pri-
"soners rest together without hearing the voice of

" the oppressor: the small and the great are there, " and the servant is freed from his master *."

VIII. The preparation for Sleep is nearly the same with the preparation for Death: and it is reasonable it should be so; because he that goes to sleep takes his leave of the world, without any absolute assurance that he shall see it again. When we go to take our natural rest, we enter into our chambers, and shut the doors. The grave is such another place of retirement, and is spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, with allusion to a bed-chamber—" Thy dead men shall " live, together with my dead body shall they arise: " awake and sing ye that are in the dust; for thy " dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast " out her dead. Come my people *enter thou into thy* " *chambers and shut thy doors about thee*: hide thyself " as it were for a little moment, until the indigna- " tion be overpast †." Hence the people of God were to learn, that the grave is but the same thing in effect with a bed-chamber: and though nature will always conclude it far more terrible to be inclosed by the door of a vault than by that of a bed-chamber; yet faith assures us we need not fear to be thus shut up, since he *who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, hath the keys of Hell and of Death* to release us; with which hope, the saints may be joyful with glory, they may *rejoice in their beds;* or, as the prophet otherwise expresses it, when they " enter into " peace, they may rest in their beds, each one walk- " ing in his uprightness ‡." From which words it follows (by the way) that as *walking* is a state of action, the intermediate state of Death, here signi-

* Job iii. 18. † Isa. xxvi. 19, 20. ‡ Ib. lvii. 2.

fied, cannot be a state wherein the soul is neither active nor sensible *.

Having entered into our chamber and shut the door, our next step is to recommend ourselves by prayer into the hands of God; as the martyr *Stephen*, when he was falling into that other Sleep, first said his prayers—*Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit.* And lastly, as he that prepares for Sleep puts off his cloaths; so, *naked came we into this world, and naked shall we go out:* But with this difference, that the nakedness of Death extends to the soul as well as to the body. For as the body is the clothing of the soul, he that is separated from the body is stripped of his raiment; whence we are said in St. *Peter's* language, to *put off this tabernacle* †; as in St. *Paul's*, when we rise again, we are said to be *clothed upon with our house which is from heaven* ‡. And it is observable that the body perishes after the example of the garment that is worn upon it; for when it is become useless, worms eat that, as moths eat the other.

IX. All these things being considered, the similitude between Sleep and Death appears to be easy, natural, and very extensive: therefore the metaphor was elegantly and properly applied by those, who called a burying-place or church-yard, *Cœmeterium* a sleeping-place or dormitory, wherein the dead which die in the Lord *rest from their labours.*

* If the reader is inclined to examine the doctrine of the Scripture and of the primitive church on this subject, I would advise him to consult *Archibald Campbell's* treatise on the *Middle State;* wherein, besides many other interesting particulars, he will meet with the curious *Prælectiones Academicæ* of bishop Overal, *de anima Patrum et Christi,* in opposition to the popish traditions concerning the same argument.

† 2 Pet. i. 14. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 2.

X. If we go on with the figure, we shall see how naturally it accommodates itself to the prospect of the resurrection; and in this the value of it chiefly consists. The season of Sleep agrees with the state of Death; for they that sleep, sleep in the night, when the earth is involved in darkness. When the sun goes down, men are called away from the labours of the body: darkness prevails over the earth, and the hurry and noise of business subsides by degrees into that silent season, which is properly called the *dead of the night*. Sleep is then almost as common as Death, and the dark hemisphere of the earth is like the region of the departed. But the order of the night, with respect to its situation between the past day and the next morning, is the thing we are to insist upon. After the labour of the day, we lie down to sleep; rest in our beds during the continuance of the night, and awake to rise up again at the return of the morning. Such too is the order of the Sleep of Death: for when the business of life is over, we die; rest in our graves during the continuance of the intermediate state, and rise again from them in the morning of the resurrection. This order of things is regularly applied in the expressions of the Scripture. The *day* is put for the season of *life*—"Work while "it is day;" the night is Death—"The night cometh "when no man can work *;" and the morning signifies the resurrection in these words of the Psalmist—"The righteous shall have dominion over them in the "morning," that is, in the morning of the resurrection; till which, we have no expectation that the saints shall reign, and the righteous be set above the wicked; neither is there any other *morning* that has

* John ix. 4.

respect to the *grave;* therefore commentators are clear as to the sense of the passage.

XI. From the order of nature thus understood and applied, we may find support against the fear of Death. Sleep itself, and the times in which we sleep and wake, all conspire to assist the understanding, and give us a comfortable prospect of our future victory over the powers of darkness. The man who should affirm at noon-day that the sun will not go down at night, might deservedly be laughed to scorn. And he would deserve as little regard, who in the midst of life should deny that he is hasting toward his death. So again; when the night is come, how senseless would it be to affirm, that there will be no morning; yet such is the stupidity of the infidel, who denies that death will be followed by a resurrection. The course of nature being obvious to sense, is depended upon by all; but that of redemption, being an object of faith, is judged improbable, though the goodness of Almighty God is at least as much engaged to fulfil the latter as the former; and it is as certain that the sun of righteousness shall illuminate the regions of death, as that the sun of the next morning shall dispel the darkness of the night: Nay, it is more certain; because we have a divine promise for the one, and nothing but probability for the other.

XII. The knowledge of the heathen extended only so far as his senses would carry him; and therefore he sorrowed without hope, and *through fear of death was all his life-time subject to bondage* *. The Christian may express his triumph in the words of the Prophet; "rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I

* Heb. ii. 15.

"fall I shall arise, when I sit in darkness the Lord "will be a light unto me*:" or, in those of the Apostle, "the night is far spent, the day is at hand:" while the heathen sings in a desponding strain;

Soles occidere et redire possunt;
Nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
Nox est perpetua una dormienda. Catull.

The Sun that sets, with light refined
Returns to gild the plains:
When man's short day hath once declined,
Perpetual night remains.

How black and dismal is this prospect! a day short and cloudy, perhaps stormy and tempestuous, succeeded by an everlasting night! this gloomy principle operated differently on different persons, according to their several dispositions and circumstances. Some were driven into professed libertinism, giving themselves up to the Atheistic maxim, "let us eat "and drink, for to-morrow we die." The poet on this principle admonishes us never to *defer* any thing that is agreeable, but to snatch the fleeting moments and apply them as fast as possible to the purposes of pleasure and debauchery, such as is not fit to be named:

Vitæ summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam,
Jam te premet NOX, &c.

Others being disappointed of pleasure, and harassed with the common evils of life, and foreseeing no future light, added to their ignorance impatience, and to impatience suicide, the natural offspring of infidelity and disappointment. But, God be thanked, we

* Mic. vii. 8.

are not under this cloud of ignorance; we are not oppressed with the terrors of perpetual darkness: we are assured, that although *heaviness may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning.* Our faith is taught to penetrate beyond the regions of darkness to a more glorious light, with which all the afflictions of this present time are not worthy to be compared. Nothing terrible should be apprehended from that night, which will at length deliver us up to the great day of Eternity. What can support us under the loss of our friends, but this consideration? No man is afflicted when his friend goes to sleep, because he expects to meet him again when he is awake. And why can we not follow him to the grave with the like assurance? St. Paul instructed his *Thessalonians,* "concerning "them which are asleep, not to sorrow as others "which have no hope*;" not to be overcome with the despair of heathens, while they entertained the faith of Christians: as if he had said, "your bre- "thren who are departed being only fallen asleep, it "would ill become you to lament them as if they "were dead and had perished." Such hopeless lamentation is contrary to our profession as to theirs; so that when we lose a friend, we should support ourselves upon such a trying occasion with this comfortable reflection—*He is not dead, but sleepeth.*

XIII. It may be some discouragement, when we consider that the Sleep of Death is so much longer and deeper than that of our natural rest. But no man is sensible of the length of that sleep from which he awakes in the morning: he has no sense of the progression of time, and seems to have slept but a moment: The interval betwixt death and the resurrec-

* 1 Thess. iv. 13.

tion may seem equally short. *Adam* and his last-departed son may perceive no difference; and a thousand years may possibly appear to them as it does to God, even as one day. Neither ought we to apprehend any difficulty from the depth and soundness of the Sleep of Death. It is observed that no noise so soon awakens a man as that of an human voice; especially if that voice calls upon him by his proper name. Now the Scripture hath given us to understand, that we shall be called up by an human voice, even that of the Son of man: "for the hour is "coming, and now is, when they that are in the "graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth *." We cannot determine whether this voice shall call upon us by name; though it is not improbable; for when *Peter* raised the disciple at *Joppa*, he said, "*Tabitha arise*;" and when Christ called upon his dead friend, he said, "*Lazarus come forth.*" But whatever may become of this conjecture, the conclusion will remain certain, that it is as easy for the Son of man to call the dead from their graves, as for us to awaken a person out of Sleep.

XIV. It is a matter of infinite importance to us *how* we are likely to rest in our last Sleep: for which purpose these few directions are necessary to be observed, and are proper to the subject. Let it be remembered then, that as they who spend the day in idleness, and the evening in riot and excess, never rest well in the night: so they whose hearts are overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, will hereafter be disturbed with the fearful watchings of a distempered mind, and annoyed with the fumes of a guilty conscience: they will be

* John v. 28.

"scared with dreams, and terrified with visions, and "be full of tossings to and fro till the dawning of "the day*." But he who hath employed himself in the preceding day by *working out his Salvation*, will rest the better for it in the night; for *the Sleep of a labouring man is sweet* †.

Extremes are here to be avoided as upon other occasions. It is agreed that the most comfortable rest is preceded by moderate eating; and that absolute emptiness may breed as much disquiet as surfeiting and excess. *The hungry man dreameth and behold he eateth, but he awaketh and his soul is empty.* No man therefore should depart from this world, till he hath first sat down to the supper of the Lamb; for this is the pledge of his future resurrection; the *viaticum*, in the strength of which he is to pass through the shadow of death. If God is pleased to grant the opportunity upon a death-bed, this last duty should never be neglected. Then we may "lay ourselves "down in peace and take our rest, for the Lord will "make us to dwell in safety;" or, as the disciples said to Christ concerning *Lazarus*, "*If* thus *we sleep*, "*we shall do well.*"

XV. The uniformity of expression concerning our present subject, which is so observable in the Old and New Testament, must necessarily imply an uniformity of doctrine. The gospel hath illustrated the doctrine of a resurrection by a metaphorical allusion to sleeping and waking; but in so doing it hath only adopted the language of the Law and the Prophets. As the same mode of expression, so the same doctrine is common to the two Revelations of Moses and of Jesus Christ. The Patriarchs and Kings under the

* Job vii. 4. † Eccl. v. 12.

Old Law went to *sleep with their fathers* in the same hope, which was afterwards more clearly published and defined by the gospel. St. *Paul*, before the writing of the books of the New Testament, calls the resurrection of the dead the *hope of Israel* *; and whence could the church collect that hope in old time, but from the Law and the Prophets? Our Saviour himself established the notion of a resurrection against the Sadducees, by appealing to a single passage in the writings of Moses; against which, impudent as they were, they had nothing to answer †. The passage itself was indirect; but the inference from it was so obvious and natural, that it could not be evaded. The same doctrine is intimated in many other passages; not by literal expression, but by inference and similitude, the usual modes of instruction throughout the whole Old Testament. And though the carnal Jews were little the wiser for the information thus communicated (as many Christians are not much the wiser now), yet the intention and meaning of similitudes so universally introduced, must have been obvious to those who were spiritually minded, and took the pains to compare the language of the Scripture with itself. It would be very imprudent to judge of the Law and its contents by what the Sadducee found there. He could discern neither the Resurrection nor any thing else that was of a spiritual nature. And who will wonder at it, when his younger brother the *Socinian* can read the New Testament without discerning the doctrine of the Christian Redemption, or the divinity of the Redeemer? The Pharisee is said to have despised other men, presuming on his own righteousness; and the Sadducee in all

* Acts xxviii. 20. compared with ch. xxiii. 6. and xxvi. 6, 7, 8.

† Matth. xxii. 31, &c.

probability despised them much more, presuming on his own wisdom; while in fact he *knew* neither *the Scriptures nor the Power of God*. *Manasseh Ben Israel*, a learned Jew, who wrote on the *Creation* and *Resurrection*, produces this among other arguments, that *Abraham*, *Jacob*, and *Moses*, are said to *sleep* and be *gathered to their fathers*: "the Patriarch Jacob "(says he) preparing for death, used those words, *I* "*shall sleep with my fathers* *; in the first of which "he gives us a sign of the Resurrection; for he who "*sleeps* awakes naturally. In the remaining part of "the sentence, *with my fathers*, he shews the immor- "tality of the soul; because the dead, with respect "to their bodies, are nothing. The Scripture hath "the same meaning where it saith of Abraham, that "he was *gathered to his people*; signifying to us by "this expression, that their souls had survived the "death of their bodies. It would be absurd to un- "derstand it of their bodies; for Moses was com- "manded of God to go up into mount *Abarim*, and "to die there and be *gathered to his people*: but the "fathers of Moses were not in Mount Abarim †." So reasons this Jew, with a sagacity not unworthy of a Christian. And those of his fathers who had their

* Gen. xlvii. 30.

† Jacobus Patriarcha accingens se ad mortem, ait, *Dormiam cum patribus meis*. Hic primâ voce innuit resurrectionem: nam qui dormit, naturaliter expergiscitur. Cum autem inquit, *cum patribus meis*, eo ostendit animam esse immortalem: nam mortui, ratione corporis, nihil sunt. Hoc ipsum scriptura indicatum vult, cum de Abrahamo ait, quod sese ad populum suum collegerit. Eo ipso loquendi modo significat, animam eorum post mortem superstitem manere. Neque vero istud intelligi potest de corpore. Nam Deus dicit Mosi, *ascende in montem Abarim istum, et morieris in monte in quem tu ascenderis ibi. Et collegeris ad populum tuum.* At Patres Mosis non erant in monte Abarim. *De Resurrect. Mort.* cap. ix. §. vi.

eyes open, could see through the temporal œconomy of the law, and distinguish those eternal rewards of faith, which were offered to the Patriarchs before the civil establishment of their nation in the land of Canaan, when the favourites of God were led about from place to place as pilgrims and strangers upon earth.

If by the *Laws of Moses* we understand the whole revelation in the Pentateuch, it certainly presents us with two different forms of theological polity; under the former of which, the servants of God were trained up to a spiritual life of faith and hope, through a course of peregrination and persecution: but under the latter, they were exercised with a temporal settlement and a ceremonial ritual. The former law of faith, as the apostle argues *, could not be made of none effect by the law of ceremonies which came after: and the Jew who did not understand both, and think himself bound to follow both, had no right to call himself a disciple of Moses.

It was therefore an hope common to all the Jews, except the Sadducees, who perversely took advantage of the worldly Elements in the ceremonial law, and were but little better than Deists, that there would be a resurrection of the dead at the coming of the Messiah: and though the general accomplishment of this hope was reserved for his second coming, a foretaste of it was given at his first, when the *bodies of saints which* slept *arose and appeared unto many* †. It was then made evident, that his sufferings and merits had overcome the sharpness of Death, and purchased a release for the prisoners of hope. That earthquake, which rent the rocks, did also open the graves of the

* Gal. iii. 17. † Matth. xxvii. 52, 53.

dead, and many of the faithful, who had rested under the old dispensation, were awakened at the departure of that supernatural darkness, which had covered the earth during the time of our Saviour's passion *.

XVI. I cannot leave this subject without observing, that the images of sleeping and waking are also applied in a moral sense to the mind and understanding. The mind hath a figurative sleep as well as the body; but with this difference, that the Scripture which signifies the Death of the body by a state of Sleep, speaks of this Sleep of the mind as a state of Death. It denotes that stupidity of ignorant and careless men, who are dead to truth, to religion, to virtue, to immortality, and all other objects, for the sake of which life and sense are conferred upon rational beings. So long as they are asleep to all those things, for which they ought to live and act, they are not reckoned to be alive, but dead. That expression of our Saviour—*Let the dead bury their dead* †, —belongs to persons in this state; and though it may be found like a contradiction, it is useful and important when properly understood. To such the apostle calls, alluding to a passage in the prophet Isaiah, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from "the dead, and Christ shall give thee light ‡." The dead are called upon to awake out of Sleep; but the spiritual sluggard is commanded to arise from Death; his sleep being as much more dangerous than Death, as Death is more terrible in appearance than common Sleep. If a Christian relapses into this state after

* There is a difficulty here in the Text, which commentators remove, by supposing that the saints were awakened at the death of Christ during the earthquake, and that they appeared in the holy City after his resurrection. In this sense it is taken by the author.

† Matth. viii. 22. ‡ Eph. v. 14.

the gospel hath called him out of it, there is little hope that he will ever be awake again to any good purpose. Pleasure, riches, and the cares of life, act as opiates; and the unhappy people, on whom they operate, know little more of their real condition than if they were in a dream. At last the charm will be dissolved, and the objects to which their fancy hath attributed substance and importance will be empty as the visions of the night, which vanish as soon as we are awake. When they are like to be alarmed, either by the word of God or the visitations of his providence, the enemy of mankind encourages them in their security, administers some new potion to stupify their consciences, and persuades them they may safely sleep on and take their rest. The mind in this sluggish state is fond of darkness, involving itself in error and scepticism, and dreading the light of truth, as the thief hides himself from the return of the morning. How much more dreadful will be the morning of the resurrection; when every sluggard must awake, and every deceiver shall be dragged out to the light! This is the hour, in which they shall wish for the mountains to fall on them, and the hills to cover them: but the night is departed for ever, and all Sleep is departed with it. The natural world and its vicissitudes are swallowed up in the spiritual, in which men must live, act, and be awake for ever, not as men but as spirits. This consideration will comfort those, who lament that they lose in Sleep so much of that precious time, which they would bestow upon the cultivation of the mind, to the honour of their Maker, and the benefit of their fellow-servants. And it is as terrible to reflect, that the miseries of another life, to those who shall experience them, will

have no intermission. But the thought is necessary for us all: and they who make the proper use of it will have this advantage, that as the fear of sin increases in them, in the same proportion will the fear of Death be diminished.

A

FREE ENQUIRY

INTO THE

SENSE AND SIGNIFICATION

OF THE

SPRING.

AS IT IS DESCRIBED IN THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

PREFACE.

A PLEASING scene in the Song of Solomon having invited me to survey attentively its several particulars, I have endeavoured to illustrate and apply them: with how much propriety, I must leave the judicious reader to determine for himself. Justice will require, that he should read with candour and suspense, what cannot well be judged of with precipitation.

The attempt to illustrate the following subject by passages of the Scripture, would be absurd, unless we take the Song of Solomon for a *mystic allegory*, pregnant with prophetical allusion in every part of it. It might be tedious and impertinent to justify this opinion formally in the discourse itself; and therefore I beg leave to offer a word or two by way of Preface.

To some readers more nice than wise, the Canticles have given offence: *Whiston* was for excluding them from the sacred Canon; but *Carpzovius* of *Leipsic*, shewed long ago that his objections were superficial and groundless, and his authorities very disingenuously falsified*. Bishop *Lowth* has gone deeper than Carpzovius; having not only indicated the general plan, but illustrated with great judgment some particular passages in the Song of Solomon: and the learned reader will find both pleasure and satisfaction if he peruses carefully the thirtieth and thirty-first Prelections.

There are three sorts of allegorical composition, the continued metaphor, the parable, and the mystic allegory. The Song of Solomon is most properly referred to the last of

* Carpzovii Critica Sacra, p. 111. circa Pseudocriticam Gul. Whistonii.

these. The matter in this species of composition is borrowed from some well known transaction, and described in such terms as connect the whole with another transaction more sublime and interesting. The forty-fifth Psalm is a poetical description of the mystical union betwixt Christ and the Church: the plan of the allegory, and the images which occur in the course of it, are much the same with those in the Canticles. The marriage of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh might be the ground of the allegory; but in some passages the composition rises as it were out of itself; leaving the literal sense, and adopting such terms as can be accommodated only to the objects of the mystic allusion. Thus at the seventh verse, the expressions drop the subject of the throne and kingdom of Solomon, and point directly to those of the Messiah—*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.* And again, at verse 12, the *King*, to whom the bride is presented, is expressly styled the LORD GOD, the object of adoration.

The learned author of the Prelections has given some cautions in regard to the explication of a mystic allegory, which deserve to be considered. He advises, first, that we should be careful not to urge our interpretations too far, nor to extend them to all the minute particulars of the allegory: and secondly, that we should observe the tenor of the Scripture itself, and conform as strictly as possible to the explications there delivered; so that the author of the Scripture may be his own interpreter. But let me observe, that the same prudence, which requires us not to urge our explications too far, will also direct us not to be over cautious, lest they should be empty, spiritless, and unaffecting. Where the whole is an allegory, the parts also are allegorical. If the *King* in the forty-fifth Psalm is Christ, and the *Queen* is the Church, then the *Oil of gladness*, the *Myrrh*, *Aloes*, and *Cassia*, and all other articles of the imagery, have their peculiar signification, and are subordinate to the general design of the composition. Whether we can ascertain the sense of every particular, is another question. Some passages will of course be very obscure, and others utterly unintelligible to us at this distance of time and place.

There can be no harm however in attempting to illustrate

them, and many useful observations may occur, provided we adhere to the general design of the whole, and use the Scripture as our guide in accommodating the several parts.

These are the rules by which I have directed myself in the following discourse; not intending to compose a rigid commentary, but rather a meditation on a scriptural subject; in which sort of composition the writer may innocently be indulged with some degree of latitude; which, though it may excite the contempt of the fastidious critic, may afford both instruction and entertainment to a pious reader: and then the end of the author will be answered.

A

FREE ENQUIRY

INTO THE

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I. The Spirit of God communicates to the mind of man the knowledge of spiritual things, by means of a certain resemblance, which the Creator hath wisely ordained between the objects of *sense* and the objects of *faith*.

Hence it is that the Scriptures abound so much with metaphorical allusions to the natural creation. Sometimes they refer us to the *heavens* and *firmament*, to the *sun*, the *moon*, and the *stars*; which, in the emblematical language of divine revelation, are but other names for *Christ*, the *church*, and the *saints* of God; these latter being illuminated by Christ, as the moon and stars shine by a light borrowed from the sun. At other times they refer us to the *earth*, and the different *seasons* of the year; to the *winds* and the *waters*, and to all the various productions of the

ground, from *gold* down to miry *clay*; from the lofty *cedar* to the lowly *hyssop*; from the *vine* blessed with a profitable increase, down to worthless thorns and briars, *nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.* Other images are borrowed from the *body* of man, with all its members, honourable or dishonourable, from the head to the foot; its strength or weakness, its health or sickness, its life or death; through all of which, and innumerable other things that are objects of sense, the divine Spirit publishes and explains, to such as have an ear, the things of the invisible world.

But of all the sacred symbols, none are so delightful to the understanding as those taken from the more beautiful appearances of nature; where the eye of the mind receives its instruction through those objects with which the eye of the body is best pleased.

II. Of this sort is that description of the *Spring* in the song of Solomon—*For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell**.

First there is that pleasing reflection, that we have escaped the bitterness of the *winter* with its cold and storms, and its dreary uncomfortable prospects. It is no small advantage to the Spring, that it succeeds the winter, and finds us ready to receive it, earnestly wishing for, and expecting a warmer and brighter season. And when it comes, with what transport do we look back upon the retiring winter; rejoicing that it is *past*, and that *the rain is over and gone*; that

* Cant. chap. ii. 10, &c.

instead of piercing cold and stormy impetuous rain, we have got a warm sun, with soft refreshing showers and dews? By the influences of which, the *flowers*, whose roots and seeds lay buried in the earth during the winter season, now spring up and adorn the surface of it. The *birds*, perceiving that the cold which had silenced them is now past, immediately upon this change in nature resume their *singing*, and fill every wood and grove with their various notes. Among the rest, and different from them all, there *is heard in the land* the soft and gentle voice of the *turtle-dove*, come abroad from the clefts of the rock, where she had retired and sheltered herself from the inclemency of the winter. The *trees* also, whose branches were stripped and left naked by the frost, now put on a fresh covering of blossoms, leaves, and fruit. *The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vine*, which in the Eastern countries, where this picture of the spring was drawn, is much forwarder than with us, *bears its tender grapes, giving a pleasant smell.*

III. Things being thus altered, the spouse, by whom we suppose the *Messiah* to be signified to us throughout this sacred Song, calls to his best beloved, his fair one *without spot or wrinkle*, even to the Christian church; bidding her remain no longer within, but *rise up* to her state of conversion, and *come away* to enjoy with him the beauties of the spring; not the spring of nature, but of grace. For as there is another sun besides that which gives light to the body, even Christ, the *Sun of righteousness*, and the *light of life*; so is there another *winter*, other *rain*, other *flowers*, *trees*, and *fruits*. In short, every article in this description was figuratively accomplished, when the Gospel first arose, with its salutary effects upon the souls of men. Every circumstance here offered

in commendation of the Spring, was verified in a proper sense by the Christian religion, when it first appeared in the world.

IV. And, 1st, what is said in the beginning—*For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.* As the Spring hath the winter going before it, so the gospel, that dispensation of mercy, was preceded by a rough and gloomy season! during which the whole world, as divided into *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were in the same state with the earth and its products, till the Spring appeareth. The poor heathen was in his wintry state of nature, *dead in trespasses and sins*; bound up in the earth by a sharp and severe frost, and as unable to help himself, as a lily to bear its flowers in the middle of *December*. While Adam remained innocent, he flourished under the favour of God in the Garden of Paradise; but when sin entered into the world, an inclement season followed it. Man's root that had been warmed with sunshine, was nipped with frost, and there came a winter of spiritual death upon him and all his posterity. In this state lay the *Gentile*, when the Spring of the gospel found him, and furnished him with the necessary means of being renewed again unto life. Then his winter was past; and that unprofitable state of nature which *no mortal is able to abide*, was changed for the blessed influences of grace and righteousness. Plants, which in time past had never been able to vegetate, lifted up their heads, and put forth their fruits, when he *sent out his word and melted them.*

V. If we turn now to the *Jew*, we shall find that to him also the gospel was as necessary as the spring. For though he was not under the dominion of nature, he was dead under that of the law: though he lay not under the depth of winter, yet a heavy and vio-

lent *rain*, such as the Hebrew in this place expresses, was still upon him; for he was not *under grace* but *under the law;* which, when void of Christ, the *end of it for righteousness*, was the very *strength of sin*, and brought down from heaven the wrath of God. Of this wrath *violent rain* is a well known emblem; whence *Zophar*, in the Book of *Job*, shewing the portion of the sinner, says—*When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast his fury upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating* *. From this rain of condemnation, brought down by the law upon the Jew, there was no escaping but by justification in Christ Jesus, *by whom all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses* †. Therefore said the Prophet *Isaiah*, foreseeing the justification of his people, *A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, a place of refuge, and covert from storm and from RAIN* ‡. This hath been fully verified in our blessed Saviour. For as any place of shelter which protects man from the weather, is itself exposed to the heavens, and receives upon it the storm and the *rain;* so did he, our place of refuge, receive upon himself the curse of the law due to our transgressions of it; and when it was falling, like an angry tempest, upon mankind, interposed between us and heaven, and catched the force of it in his own body. Like Moses, who, when there was thunder and hail in Egypt, and fire ran along upon the ground, went *out of the city*, exposing himself single and defenceless to the terrors of divine wrath, and *spreading forth his hands* to make intercession for the sinful people of Egypt! On him its rage was spent; and

* Job xx. 23. † Acts xiii. 39. ‡ Isaiah iv. 32.

there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; for *we are not under the law, but under grace.* This rain of wrath is *over and gone;* or, to use the words of Christ when he had borne it for us upon the cross—*It is finished.*

VI. Such was the deliverance of the Jew and Gentile at the Spring of the gospel: and this the encouragement to them both to rise up and come away to the Christian church; where the Gentile should no longer be left in his frozen state of nature, nor the Jew have any thing more to fear from the severity of the law; which was blown over as a black wintry cloud, giving place to a more clear and refreshing dispensation of mercy.

VII. The change that ensued, was the same with that which is wrought here before us in the earth, when *the winter is past;* and it is described to our senses under a succession of beautiful images, all belonging to the Spring—*The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing* of birds *is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*

VIII. First, *the flowers appear on the earth;* when the light of the gospel visited the world, mankind were thereby raised from a death of sin unto a life of righteousness; they, who lay buried in the earth of nature, sprang up as *flowers,* and *arose from the dead* when *Christ gave them light.* Being planted together with him, at baptism, into the likeness of his death, they were renewed unto grace, and flourished in the power of his resurrection. This was the natural consequence of their coming into the church of Christ; for let but a dry rod be laid up in the sanctuary, and it buds, and blossoms, and bears fruit. If we would know what it is to be made a member of Christ's church, and become an heir of glory, let us *consider*

the flowers of the field how they grow; and when we understand this, we cannot long be ignorant of the other. For the flowers of the field and the children of God are both raised up from a state of death to a new state of life and glory, and that by the like means. A flower rises from its grave in the earth by the operation of *light* and *water*. *The tender grass* (as the prophet David expresses it in his last words) *springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain.* The rain moistens and prepares the mould which supplies the plant with its substance, and the light forms it and brings it forward. Our senses tell us that this is the order of nature: let it but rain and shine in a due proportion, and the flowers are sure to grow and flourish. Thus it is with man in his birth and growth of grace; both of which are brought about by the operation of Christ and the Holy Ghost, represented to us in the Scripture style by light and rain water. The power of the Spirit residing in the Messiah was *to come down like the rain into a fleece of wool, even as the drops that water the earth.* The same is alluded to by the prophet *Hosea* in the following words—*Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD, till He come and rain righteousness upon you*—That is, till He come and rain the Spirit upon you, *for the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* As the powerful operations, so the language, of the Spirit, designed for the purposes of grace, is likened to the same natural agent—*My doctrine* (says Moses in his last song) *shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.* Hence the soul, when refreshed and supplied with the divine Spirit, is compared by the prophet *Jeremiah* to a *watered garden;*

and they who are destitute of grace are *clouds without water, carried about of winds.*

IX. As the Holy Spirit has *rain* for his emblem, so Christ is signified to us by the *light*, the other agent in vegetation. With the prophet Malachi, He is *the sun of righteousness arising with healing in his wings.* In the last words of David, He is compared to *the light of the morning;* and he said of himself, that He was *the light of the world*—giving light and warmth to the soul as the sun does to the earth. The sun was darkened when *his* glory was eclipsed upon the cross: and *Elymas* the sorcerer was struck with blindness, *not seeing the sun for a season,* because he would not see *Christ* when He was preached to him. So that we have the same agents in the invisible as in the visible world; spiritual vegetation is conducted in the same manner as natural; man is raised up to a state of grace, as the flowers of the spring are made to arise from the earth: the flowers grow by *light* and *rain;* man by *Christ* and the *Holy Spirit;* whose blessed influences at the appearance of the gospel were shed abroad upon the whole Jewish and Gentile world. For as Christ was *the glory of his people Israel,* so was He *a light to lighten the Gentiles;* and on them the rain of grace also fell as at first upon the Jewish disciples, who were astonished when they found that on the Gentiles also was *poured out,* as rain from the clouds of Heaven, *the gift of the Holy Ghost.* Thus did God, in an evangelical sense, *make his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sent rain on the just and on the unjust.*

X. By these means, and by these only, the flowers alluded to by the prophet in this sacred song, were made to grow. Several things are to be observed, wherein they as nearly resemble the children of God,

as in the manner of their generation from the earth. First and chiefly in their *attire* and *outward appearance.* They are adorned with all the colours of the sun's light, either simple or compounded in a thousand various mixtures; and these colours, like those in the High-priest's garments, are *for glory and for beauty.* The priestly garments of *gold* (that is *yellow*) and *blue,* and *purple,* and *scarlet,* and *fine white linen,* prefigured that brightness and perfection with which *Christ,* our true High-priest, should be clothed: and the colouring of a flower is given it for a like purpose, as a figure of those garments of salvation, that grace and beauty of holiness wherewith the saints are invested through the power of the Christian faith. This will explain what is said by *Isaiah* the prophet on the conversion of the heathens—*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon,* all of them mountains remarkable for flowers: then follows the cause of this alteration—*They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.* The poor barren *Gentiles,* by seeing the glory and excellency of Christ, were themselves to put on the *glory* of *Lebanon,* and the *excellency* of *Carmel* and *Sharon;* at the sight of their Saviour, they were to be *changed into his image,* and partake of his perfections, who calls himself the *Rose of Sharon* and the *Lily of the vallies*—and says of his disciples—*The glory which thou gavest me I have given unto them* *. Thus we find it in nature: for flowers of all kinds resemble, both in shape and colour, the

* John xvii. 22.

light that shines upon and gives them their birth. They are divided into rays or points, like the beams that proceed from the heavenly luminaries *; so that the earth covered with flowers makes the same kind of appearance as the Firmament bespangled with stars; and for their number and their glory, both I think have an equal claim to represent *the children of Abraham.*

There is one very considerable circumstance, common to the clothing of a flower and to the righteousness signified by it—that both are equally the work or gift of God. It is *God* that *clothes the grass of the field* with such beauty; and it is God that giveth to his people the far more lasting ornaments of grace and sanctification: Man, with his utmost skill, can never weave such delicate embroidery as we find in one single leaf of any ordinary flower: and no works or merits of man, with all his *toil* and *spinning*, can compose that *Robe of righteousness* without which we must not hope to appear in the presence of God. As *Solomon in all his glory*, (which was the work of *man*) was not arrayed like a lily (the work of God;) so the righteousness of human wisdom, commonly called morality, is not only inferior in degree, but essentially different in kind, from that righteousness which is the work of the gospel, as it would be easy enough to shew: It is but as filthy *rags* compared to *fine linen, clean and bright;* or as a ragged thistle to the glory of a rose and the whiteness of a lily. Therefore, thanks to our merciful Saviour, that we have full encouragement to expect a better raiment than

* Upon the flow'rs of heav'n we gaze;
The stars of earth no wonder raise:
Tho' these perhaps do, more than they,
The life of mankind sway. COWLEY.

any with which we are able to furnish ourselves. *For if God so clothe the grass of the field, how much more will he clothe* those that believe on him?

Righteousness, as well as the glory of a lily, being the gift of God, they who trust not in God for it will be left destitute.—The Jews, who *sought it not by Faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law, going about to establish their own righteousness,* have reduced themselves to a miserable condition. Instead of the glory of a flower, they have nothing but the roughness and deformity of thorns and briars. Their *Sharon,* as the prophet foretold, *is turned into a wilderness;* and while the wilderness of the Gentiles is encouraged to *rejoice and blossom as the rose,* the case with them is the very reverse—*Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people—for the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them, thorns shall be in their tabernacles.* From this difference between the Jew and Gentile, it is said of the Christian church, when compared with such unbelievers, *As the lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters.*

XI. Another thing to be observed in the *flowers* that *appear on the earth*—is their variety as to shape, size, and colour; like the children of God, who are endued with different graces and with different degrees of grace. For as one flower, like one star, differeth from another in glory, so also do the spiritual plants of the church; some of which have a larger portion of illumination and grace than others; and some have gifts in which others are deficient: for, saith the Apostle—*Every man hath his proper gift of God;* as flowers after their kind, have that size and colour which God hath been pleased to bestow upon

* Cant. chap. ii. 2.

them. No Christian is to be blamed for wanting what God hath not given him; as no flower is to be esteemed an imperfect work, for not having in it all the colours of the Rainbow.

XII. The sweet *smell* of flowers is another excellence we are to take notice of: for by a *sweet savour* is meant any thing acceptable to God, be it a word or a work of righteousness, any thing meritorious through Christ Jesus. And as the sweet scent of flowers is not conveyed to us, unless a brisk air blow it from them; so the sweet and pleasant odours of righteousness, in the people of God, cannot arise but through the power of the Holy Spirit, breathing upon their hearts. Therefore the spouse in this divine song calls upon the Spirit to produce this blessed effect—*Awake, O north-wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices,* the sweet aromatic odours, *may flow out.* Let but the Spirit thus bestow his grace upon us, and the church, as *Isaac* pronounced of *Jacob concerning things to come, is like the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.*

But this smell, though it is precious and acceptable with God, and endears the Christian to his brethren, is of little account with the men of this world; it is rather disagreeable and offensive to them. The same is observable in nature: for naturalists have informed us, there are some dirty crawling insects which will sicken and die at the smell of a rose: a case which doth well illustrate the different success of the Holy Apostles, when they preached, through the power of the Holy Spirit upon them, the doctrine of Christ: for while they were *a savour of life unto life* in *those that were saved, They were a savour* of *death unto death in them that perished.*

XIII. To what hath been said much more might

be added on the way of managing flowers: for special care should be had that they be kept clear of weeds, which rob them of their nourishment, shading them at the same time from the sun's light and warmth, and infecting the air with a poisonous scent. Times would soon be altered for the better, if this rule were observed by those who are appointed overseers of God's garden, and are commissioned with an authority to plant and to pluck up. The few flowers there are would thrive much better than they do, if *they* were careful to prevent any *ill weeds* from continuing amongst them; *looking diligently*, as the Apostle has directed them, *lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble* the church, *and thereby many be defiled.* The same evil was provided against by the oath and covenant mentioned in the twenty-ninth chapter of Deuteronomy—*Lest there should be among you man or woman, or family or tribe, whose heart turneth away from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these Nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth hemlock and wormwood—The Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the Tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the Covenant written in this book of the Law.* Noxious weeds are not to expect any preservation from the power and providence of God; for Christ hath told us, that *every plant, which his heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.* This practice ought now to be observed; and certainly would be under a regular exertion of ecclesiastical discipline; but the ignorance of the age co-operating with its licentiousness, hath induced such a confirmed misunderstanding of this whole matter, that there is no hope of our seeing this discipline restored. We must wait with patience, till

Christ shall take upon himself the office of separating the flowers from the weeds, and of casting out of his garden *all things that offend.*

XIV. It will be proper here to stop awhile and reflect on what hath been said, before we enter upon the other images not yet explained.

It hath been shewn, that the first work of the Christian religion was to prepare the way for all the good effects it afterwards produced, by bringing the light of life and immortality to the Gentiles, and removing the Jews from under the rigour of the law, to be saved by Faith in *Christ Jesus.* This is expressed in those words—*The winter is past, the rain is over and gone.*—The regions of mortality are warmed and enlightened by the return of the divine light and truth to them: and they, who lay exposed to condemnation under the law, have nothing more to fear from it: that cloud broke over the head of *Christ,* and discharged upon *him* that *rain* of wrath which otherwise must have fallen upon *us.*

This change in the spiritual œconomy produced such an effect, as the clearing up of the season doth in the course of nature. For mankind, when visited by the gospel, *passed from death unto life;* as, at the return of the spring, the *flowers appear upon the earth.*

XV. But as the virtue of the spring is to be discerned in many other effects beside the regeneration of flowers; so is the power of the gospel in other effects upon the human soul, beside its redemption from a state of spiritual death; more than can be possibly expressed under any single operation of nature. For when it raises us from the earth, it opens our mouths and fills them with the praises of God: as the same season, which gives the flowers their

birth, inspires the birds of the air with chearfulness to begin afresh their *singing*, which had been interrupted by the storm and cold of the *winter*. When Christ is come to give us light and warmth, we spring up from our death of nature; and our next step is to return God thanks and praises for our deliverance: first *awaking*, as *Deborah* calls upon herself to do; then *uttering the song* of thanksgiving, which God puts into our mouths.

These things are laid down in the same order by the prophet *Isaiah*. In the beginning of his thirty-fifth chapter he tells us, that *the desert should blossom as the rose:* then immediately he adds—*it shall rejoice even with joy and singing*. This second mark of the spring was to attend upon the first: at the appearance of *flowers on the earth, the time of the singing of birds* was to come with them; and even *the wilderness and solitary place*, the haunt of wild beasts and doleful creatures, should become the resort of musical birds singing among the branches. The real meaning of which is no other than what the prophet himself hath expressed for us at the close of the chapter. *The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion* (the holy mountain of Christ's church *) *with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

While we lay in our winter of spiritual death, no song was to be heard from us: that was no *time* for singing; for where death is, its ordinary attendants are *sorrow* and *sighing;* which accordingly prevailed over all the world, till the *ransom* paid for it by *Christ Jesus*, put them to flight.

* Heb. xii. 22.

Whoever heard the nightingale sing in the midst of winter? the stork, and the swallow, and the nightingale, and other birds, all know their time, and never cross the seas to visit us, till the spring is advanced, and the quickening beams of the sun have inspired a new life into the animal and vegetable creation. How therefore could the heathen land *rejoice*, till *the flowers appeared on it?* Till the spring of Christianity approached it, and the *glory of the Lord Jehovah, the holy one of Israel, dwelt in the midst of it?* Then every redeemed soul broke out into songs of joy and thanksgiving:—*From the uttermost part of the earth songs were heard, even glory to the righteous.*

The same deliverance which gave them cause to sing, gave them the power to do it. For as man, in his natural state, has no reason to rejoice, so has he no ability, therefore said the Prophet—*The tongue of the dumb shall sing.* And hence it is, that in our excellent form of common-prayer, we beseech God to "open our lips, that our mouths may shew forth his "praise."

Thus does the joy of the saints, on the appearance of the gospel, answer to the *singing of birds* on the arrival of the spring: the time and cause of both are alike; and they celebrate the same subject, the glory of the light. Nor do they less agree in *place:* the habitation of the Lord's redeemed being the same with that of the birds: they sit and sing in the *tree* of the church, which is the mystical body of Christ. For *the kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.* The *kingdom of heaven* is an expression in

the parables, well known to signify the *Gospel-state.* The grain of mustard-seed, the least of all seeds, may be emblematic of *Christ,* who humbled himself to become the least in the kingdom of heaven: and who at his death was sown in the field of this world, but sprang up to power and glory at his resurrection: from the least of all seeds becoming the greatest of all trees, extending its mystical branches to the ends of the earth, and affording an habitation to birds of every sort, which sit and sing among the branches, and are safe under the shadow of it, and in it there is meat for all *. Such is the peace of those who are called to a state of salvation, and such is their chief and best employment. Their *winter is past;* their *rain over and gone;* and *the time of* their *singing is come.* The *sorrow* and *sighing* of men *without hope* is fled away; and changed into the melody of the heart, breaking out into psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs—for there is no real cause of sorrow left, when once the soul is truly converted to Christ—we are to be of *good cheer* in the presence of him, who hath *overcome the world* for us.

* "Totius enim mundi judex—qui, in corde terræ in tumulo oc-
" cultatus, *tridui spatio in maximam arborem excrevit,* ramos suos ad
" extremos terræ fines protendens. Ex illo propullantes duodecim
" apostoli, rami illi floridi atque excelsi, gentibus, non secus ac vo-
" lucribus cœli, tegmen præbuere; quibus ramis omnes obumbrati,
" tanquam volucres in nidum congregati, ejus, qui ab illis proma-
" nabat, lautæ ac cœlestis alimoniæ participes sunt facti." Fragmenta S. *Irænei,* antepenult. Edit. Grabe.

There may seem to be an ambiguity, if not an impropriety, in applying the grain of mustard from the gospel-state to the person of Christ; but as the Church is no other than the body of Christ, its privileges and benefits cannot be considered independent of his person: and thus he himself hath considered them on another occasion —*I am the Vine, ye are the branches.*

XVI. From the singing of birds we proceed to another sign of the spring, the *voice of the turtle*, which the spouse tells his beloved is now *heard* in the land. The voice of the turtle is the voice of the Holy Ghost, who descended upon Christ at his baptism in the shape of a dove, and is called upon at the fourteenth verse of this chapter under that name—*O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice.* There is a kind of dove in the eastern countries, which in the hard weather, when it casts its feathers, hides itself in the holes of the rocks, and there lies silent till the spring invites it abroad again. Thus, while the world was in its winter, while the heathen people *sat in darkness and the shadow of death*, and the Jews were become an evil and adulterous generation, the true dove was departed from them. For "the Holy Spirit of discipline" (as the author of the book of *Wisdom* hath truly observed) "will flee "deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without "understanding." It could no more abide with a wicked world, than the dove of Noah could settle upon a deluge of waters. But when a new people were prepared for the Lord, the dove descended from a rock out of the reach of every storm, and was sent down to dwell among men upon earth; so that her *voice* was *now heard in the land.* It was heard from the Scriptures, in which *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST;* whose voice was before unknown to the Gentiles. By the Jews it was heard in a manner to which they were almost entirely unaccustomed, that is, in the spiritual interpretation given by the Apostles of Christ, who were made able ministers—*not of the letter, but of the Spirit;* not of the voice of words, which voice they that heard *in-*

treated that the word should not be spoken to them any more; but of the still small voice of the gospel, a sound of peace and comfort, like the note of a turtle-dove; which as soon as the Gentiles heard, they besought *that the same words might be preached unto them the next Sabbath.*

The voice of the turtle was again heard from the mouths of all true Christians, who shewed out of a good conversation their works with meekness of wisdom; having exchanged the spirit of strife and envying, with which all men are by nature possessed, for the *wisdom that is from above,* and *is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; answering* in every respect to the temper and voice of a turtle-dove; the most inoffensive and undesigning of birds, as the lamb is of beasts; whence they are the fittest emblems in all nature, the one to represent Christ, the other the Holy Ghost.

XVII. We must now consider another circumstance common to the Spring of nature and of Christianity. *The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs.* By the *fig-tree* is signified *repentance:* Its *green figs* signify the first fruits it brought forth upon the preaching of the gospel; which preaching treated generally of these two subjects—*Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.*—When Adam discovered his nakedness and repented of his sin, he chose for the sign of his repentance the leaves of a fig-tree, which are rough and grating to the flesh, and composed a garment suitable to his disobedience. The fig-tree is filled with a milky juice extremely rough and bitter to the taste; but its fruit is of all others the sweetest. So is the fruit of repentance sweet and acceptable to God. But the word of life, which

makes us fruitful to produce it, is at first very bitter, and contrary to the depraved appetites of human nature, which hates the holy discipline God prescribes to it, *and desires not the knowledge of his ways.*

We suppose it is for these qualities, that the *fig-tree* is made a type of the church, whose first duty it is to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance. A certain man,* says our blessed Lord, *had a fig-tree,* meaning the Jewish people, *planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. And he said to the dresser of his vineyard, behold these three years,* (such was the time of Christ's ministry among the Jews) *I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none.* At another time, when he was in the way to Jerusalem, he saw a *fig-tree;* and when he came to it, he *found nothing thereon but leaves only; and said, let no fruit grow on thee henceforwards for ever: and presently the fig-tree withered away.* Such was the state, and such the punishment of the Jews: they were covered with *leaves*—with outward appearances of holiness; but there was no *fruit* upon them: they were deceivers and hypocrites with God; ever ready to say, *I go, Sir; but went not.* The Jewish fig-tree bringing no fruit, the doctrine of repentance from dead works was preached to the Gentiles, and a fresh tree planted in the field of the world: that the old fruitless tree, might at a proper season be *cut down* and suffered to *cumber the ground* no longer. This accordingly came to pass: for when the Gentiles had received the word with gladness, and the new tree began to put forth its leaves, then every thing foretold by our blessed Saviour was fulfilled upon Jerusalem. With a view to which, he instructed his disciples in the signs of that time, bidding them learn a parable of the fig-tree: for, said he, *When his branch*

is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is now nigh at hand: so likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand—nigh to the Gentiles; among whom the kingdom should be set up, when it was taken from the Jews, and *given to a nation bringing forth the fruits of it.* This is the fig-tree, whose green figs being put forth, were another infallible sign added to the foregoing, that the spring of the gospel was come upon mankind.

XVIII. To make the description complete, there remains yet one more image, and that the highest and most important of all, expressing the union of Christians with Christ Jesus, their head and root, from whom they derive all their spiritual growth and nourishment—*The vines, with the tender grape, give a good smell. I am the vine,* says Christ; *ye are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* As the branch must have sap derived to it from the root; so must the Christian have virtue from Christ, whose *word is to abide in him;* as sap must abide in the branch of a vine, before it can bear grapes. As the sap is, such will the fruit be. If the *word* be defiled by any impure mixtures of tradition, deism or heathen philosophy, it produces *sour grapes;* if the word be gone, and a man turned infidel, the branch is dried up, and its *end* is, *to be burned.* As there is no true vine but Christ, let a man be out of Christ, and he is another kind of plant—a thorn or thistle, such as the soil of human nature produces of its own accord: and *men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles.* Nothing but the vine, with life in it from Christ, can bear the fruits of righteousness; nothing but the fig-tree, with the virtue of the divine

word in it, can bear the fruits of repentance. The church, as made up of Christ's members, is to be dressed as the vine: for as every branch that beareth not fruit is taken away, so should every fruitless member be cut off from the church: according to which figure St. *Paul* speaks—*I would they were even cut off that trouble you;* lest the rotten branches, by remaining upon the tree, should make it perish down to the root. *Every branch, that beareth fruit,* the *Father purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. To him that hath, more is given;* more *grace* and divine knowledge is bestowed upon him, that his fruit may be thereby increased, cleansed and perfected: for, adds our blessed Saviour, *ye are clean, through the words which I have spoken unto you.*

From these parallel places of holy Scripture we may understand, that if the vine is the mystical body of Christ; its *tender grapes,* like the *green figs,* will denote the *early fruits* to be put forth by the church upon its first reception to the Christian faith. The *good smell* ascribed to them, denotes their acceptance with God; who is delighted with every good work brought forth in Christ, and will, for his sake only, impute it to us for our eternal justification.

XIX. Every Christian, who considers these things, should enquire, how far this mystical description of the privileges to which we are admitted under the gospel is fulfilled in his own heart; whether he is sensible of these great blessings, and thankful to God for calling him to this state of salvation.

XX. Let him reflect in the first place, whether he hath rightly understood the terrors of the law of *Moses,* and those denunciations of wrath, which were published against all transgressors at Mount *Sinai:* for these will continue in force against himself, un-

less he can find deliverance and safety in that *man* whom God hath appointed *as a refuge from storm and from rain.* He becomes a refuge to us by means of his *church,* his *word,* and his *sacraments:* so that if we fail not to take due advantage of these, we may then be assured (upon the best grounds) that our *winter is past, the rain over and gone:* for *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus:* who are *found in him, not having their own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith.*

XXI. It is also his duty to be very careful, that the roots of Christian Graces, which God hath planted in his heart, be cherished and improved every day. No ill weeds must be suffered to prevail so far as to defile and overpower the conscience; nor any thorns and briars of worldly cares choke the word of God, and render it unfruitful. His garden must not lie without order or culture, like that of the sluggard, lest God, in just judgment, should withhold the dew of his grace, and forbid the true light to shine any more upon it for ever.

XXII. When he imitates the cheerfulness of the birds in singing psalms and spiritual songs of thanksgiving to the Father of lights; he should make proper distinctions, and consider which will agree best with the state of his own heart, the melody of a saint, or the sighs and lamentations of a sinner. If his conscience should inform him, that he can have no just title to reckon himself among the number of the *just,* or rather of the justified; it will not *well become* such an one *to be thankful.* It must indeed argue a monstrous degree of carelessness or assurance, for a man to be forward in praising and magnifying

the name of God, on account of that mighty salvation, in which he himself is not like to have any share. Let him, therefore, who singeth in the church, *sing with the spirit* and with *the understanding*, and upon the grounds of Faith, Hope, Charity, and a good Conscience: without which, how loud soever his voice may sound here below, it will never be heard in the choir of saints and angels above.

XXIII. In his conversation with men, he should be meek, gentle, merciful, and compassionate; conforming himself to the spirit and temper of the dove. If there is continual clamour, railing, wrath, and evil-speaking in a family, it is a sign that the *gospel of peace* hath not been received in it. It is either not there, or it is without its influence; and it is hard to say which of these cases is the worst; *If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his:* and certainly he is without the spirit, if he is without its fruit.

In his private conferences with God and his own heart, his devotion should partake much of resignation, humiliation, and all the softer expressions of contrition, like to the mournings of the turtle; rather than of heat, zeal, anger, and indignation, even allowing sin itself to be the object of these emotions.

XXIV. All men being sinners by nature, the fruits of repentance are to be brought forth by all. Every believer, when called to the Gospel, is made a branch of that fig-tree, which is to bear the fruits of repentance; and Christ, to whom all things are naked, and open, will be coming from time to time *seeking fruit on this fig-tree.* If God receiveth from us only the service of the lips, this may be taken as a sign that

the tree hath some *leaves* upon it; and thus far the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees extended. But unless the righteousness of a Christian shall exceed theirs, he must expect to be *cut down*, as they were, and suffered no longer to encumber the ground of the sacred vineyard.

XXV. The last thing suggested to us is the necessity of communion with Jesus Christ, as the only root of spiritual life and perfection: concerning which, it is our duty to guard against all the incroachments of *natural religion*, falsely so called; not attributing to human nature any independent principle either of wisdom or sanctification. For as surely as the vine-branch can have no powers independent of the root, so surely cannot the Christian think, act, or live, as such, but so far only as he derives his abilities from the stock upon which he is engrafted.

Nor are we to suppose, as some do, who allow the necessity of this communion, that a mere act of the mind is sufficient to advance us into a state of membership with the true vine. If this were the case, then might the church be reduced to a single individual, a church in one person: But, on the contrary, many things are necessary to be done, which no man can do for himself: and therefore Christ established a *visible society* upon earth, investing some of its members with different powers and offices, all serving to the same end; that is, all concurring to lead individuals through the means of grace to the possession of glory. As the vineyard doth not plant, and prune, and cultivate itself, but submits to him whom the owner hath appointed to dress it; so the Christian must submit to the institutions of Christ;

and to those persons by whom they are administered. It might be one reason why the vine in particular is selected upon this occasion, because it yields so striking an example of the salutary effects of obedience and dependence. It is a weak and trailing plant, given to excessive irregularity and luxuriance, and therefore cannot prosper without some helping hand to direct, restrain, adjust, and support it in its proper station.

If the church then, as the Scripture speaks, is the body of Christ, and communion with Christ is communion with his church; every prudent person, who values the welfare of his own soul, will avoid that wild *high-flying* *, self-governing spirit, which makes as light of all institutions, as if they were the inventions of a worldly policy, instead of being what they really are, the ordinances of Christ himself, for the life, growth, and final salvation of his own members. Happy are they, who are wise enough to escape all those errors concerning this great subject, which may now so easily be infused by the prejudices of education, or the fashionable doctrines of a careless and ignorant age, whose chief religion seems to consist in preaching peace to all sorts of people, under all sorts of circumstances.

XXVI. But it is possible for a man to avoid the presumptuous innovations of *Socinians*, and other infidels, and to be a branch duly and orderly inserted into the true vine; and yet, after all, to be so worthless and unprofitable in his conversation, as to be altogether dry and fruitless. The end of such a

* The word *high-flying* hath been frequently applied to those who set authority high, either in the church or in the state; but they who set *themselves* above both, have the better title to it.

branch is to be *cut off and cast into the fire.* The negligence of men in authority may permit a dead branch to remain upon the tree: but there is a time coming, when God shall descend from heaven *to behold and visit this vine.* What is now amiss, will then be rectified, without respect of persons. For which great day of visitation and inquisition may God Almighty by his grace prepare all those who diligently seek it! AMEN.

AN

ESSAY

ON

CONFIRMATION.

AN

ESSAY

ON

CONFIRMATION.

I. THAT there was such a practice as *Confirmation* in the primitive Church, is clear from the express words of the New Testament; and that the proper subjects of it were those Christians who had already been admitted to *Baptism.* For the proof of which, we need only attend to the following account of this matter, which is delivered to us in the *Acts of the Apostles—Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then layed they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost* *. The occasion which called for the exercise of Confirmation, and all the circumstances which attended it, are here so exactly related, that I shall endeavour to explain the

* Acts viii. 14, &c.

subject by selecting the particulars of this account, and making such remarks as are naturally suggested by each of them.

II. It does not appear that the Christian Church subsisted any where as yet in its due form but at Jerusalem. This City was the common seat of the Apostles, who resided there, with the Elders and Deacons, as a Collegiate body; consulting together for the propagation of the Faith, sending abroad occasionally such members as they thought proper, from their own society, for the work of the ministry, and receiving intelligence from their agents in all quarters concerning such questions as arose, and such occurrences as happened to them in the course of their labours.

When they heard that Samaria had *received the Word of God*, that is, that the people of Samaria had repented, believed, and been baptized; it is no question amongst them what ought to be done next, but it follows, as a thing of course, that they sent out *Peter* and *John*, two persons of the Apostolical Character.

Here I cannot help observing, though it is somewhat foreign to my subject, that this occurrence seems by no means consistent with that superiority which some have attributed to St. *Peter* over the assembly of the Apostles: it being plain that he was among his *peers*, and subject to be sent out by them in common with other persons of the same order.

Peter and *John* being sent upon this work without any previous consultation concerning the expediency or necessity of it, it may be collected, that the Order and Discipline of the Church was already settled as to this affair, and that Confirmation by the imposition of apostolical hands was appointed to succeed regu-

larly to the sacrament of Baptism. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, reckoning up the principles of the Christian doctrine, places repentance first in order, then faith, then baptism, and after that the *laying on of hands:* which cannot signify the imposition of hands in ordination; for then it could never have been placed among the first elements of instruction, proper to those only who were *unskilful in the word of righteousness* *. His meaning is best explained by his own example, who, when he had found some disciples but partially instructed at Ephesus, *baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus,* and then *laid his hands upon them* †, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. From all which it certainly follows, that the laying on of hands was the ordinary practice of the Christian Apostolical Church, and that it was next in order to Baptism. That it was not a part of Baptism itself, appears from the example of those at Samaria, whom Philip had baptized, but had left them to be confirmed at some other time by some other hands.

This matter being so clear according to the terms of the Scripture, I think it needless to enquire into the practice of the first Ages of the Church next after the Apostles. It is certain that Confirmation was universally observed, and that more strictly than in the lower ages; but instead of being known by the term of Confirmation, it was more usually signified by *sealing, anointing,* and the *imposition of hands.* Yet the term now in use seems to be warranted by the language of the New Testament. When Paul and Barnabas had determined to visit their brethren in every city where they had already preached the word of God, it is said of Paul, that "he went through Syria

* Chap. v. 13. † Acts xix. 5, 6.

"and Cilicia, *confirming the Churches.*" His design was to advance those who had already been converted and baptized; and as he had no time to waste, it is most probable that his visitation was official; that he acted in the Apostolical character, and confirmed his converts by the imposition of hands. But whatever ambiguity there may be in the name, in the thing itself there is none at all. So we may pass from the Institution, to consider the persons by whom it is administered.

III. *Philip* the Deacon had preached the Word to the people of *Samaria,* and baptized them, both men and women, and was still amongst them. But though signs and miracles were done by him, it is plain he was not qualified to administer imposition of hands, because other persons were formally sent out from the Church for this purpose: and as the persons so sent out were of the Apostolical Order, to them the office properly belonged.

By this example we are taught, that God hath appointed certain distinctions of ministerial Duty, for the sake of Peace, Order, and Edification in his Church: and farther, that the holiness and other personal qualifications of any minister, are distinct from the holiness and authority of his office. For though *Philip* was a person considerable enough to work such miracles as astonished the *Samaritans,* and procured him the good opinion of *Simon Magus* himself, he had no right to administer Confirmation. And if Confirmation was proper to the Apostles in the first age of the Church, it is now proper to a Bishop. For Bishops have succeeded to that Character with which the Apostles were invested; at least, to those parts of their Character which are necessary for the Church in the latter times. Through all the inter-

mediate ages down to the Reformation, the Christian Society has been governed by ministers of three different Orders, with the names of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. A Church without a Bishop was never heard of till the fifteenth Century; when some Protestants, who were willing to shake off the errors of Rome, and thought they could reform on no other terms but those of Presbytery, pleaded necessity in excuse for the defect. The Scripture shews us what the government of the Church ought to be by shewing us what it was. For a fact or precedent, where the example is authoritative, may be depended upon with greater certainty than a verbal distinction. Words are liable to different meanings; and an artful man can mould them into so many forms, and invest them with such a cloud of Criticism, that they shall have no discernible meaning at all. The fact I speak of, is the government of the Church by three Orders of Ministers, at its first Establishment. The twelve Apostles were first ordained by Christ himself out of the number of his Disciples; of whom he *chose twelve*, and *named* them *Apostles;* accommodating their number to the primitive partition of the Church of Israel. After these he appointed *other seventy* also, who were sent out with a ministerial Character, but were inferior to the Apostles, both in name and authority: for the Apostles, even after their ordination, are frequently called by the general name of *Disciples;* but it does not appear that any of the *seventy* were ever called by the name of *Apostles.* This Appellation was restrained to the twelve who were first appointed; and none other could be intitled to the name, till they were formally invested with the office. Accordingly it appears, that when the traitor Judas was gone to his own place, and the Apostles

were reduced to Eleven, two persons were set apart from the disciples as candidates, and one of them taken by lot to the Apostolical office. The solemnity of this appointment would have been unnecessary and vain, unless the Apostles were distinguished to a superiority above the other disciples.

As the business of the Christian Society increased upon the hands of its ministers, *seven* more were ordained, who in respect of their superintending the distribution of ecclesiastical charities, were called *deacons;* and in respect of their office as teachers of those converts to whom they administered the sacrament of Baptism, were called *Evangelists*.

By the most early constitution of the Christian Church, it was committed to the ministry of three different orders, not yet so exactly ascertained by their names as in the succeeding ages, but always distinct in office and authority. We are not to suppose that these three orders were a novel institution, peculiar to the Christian Church; but rather a translation of the three essential parts of the ministry from the Priesthood under the Law to the ministry of the New Testament *.

Such was the form of the Church in every city and region, till it was interrupted by the encroachments of the Bishop of Rome. Other Bishops had exercised such an authority only, and in such a form as the Scripture itself had delivered down to them. And this case is so plain, that *Calvin* himself could not but allow, that the *ancient Bishops had invented no other form of governing the Church, but such as the Lord had prescribed by his own word* †. So that a

* Consult *Bp. Overall*, Book ii. chap. vi.

† *Calvin Inst.* lib. iv. cap. iv. sec. 4.

Church which preserves this form by succession, and administers Confirmation by the first of the orders above mentioned, is according to the Apostolical pattern, our enemies themselves being judges. This being now clear, as to the persons whose office it is to administer Confirmation; we must enquire who are the persons proper to receive it.

IV. When the Apostles heard that Samaria had *received the Word of God*, they sent Peter and John to lay their hands upon them: therefore they who have *received the Word of God* are the proper subjects of Confirmation. By receiving the Word of God, the case itself instructs us we are here to understand the taking upon themselves the Christian profession in baptism; and baptism includes *faith* and *repentance*. He that perseveres in his repentance, retains his faith, and has a competent knowledge of the Word of God, is qualified for the farther endowments of divine grace. If the Apostles when they visited Samaria, or any other of the first Churches, found therein persons who had departed from the conditions of their baptism, without question they regarded such persons as utterly unfit for the imposition of hands. This was the case of *Simon*, a man of a vain worldly spirit, who neither understood nor relished the purity of the Gospel, and was therefore declared to have *neither part nor lot in that matter*.

V. The circumstances of the Church being now so different from what they were formerly, it will be a matter of some difficulty to explain the *benefit* of Confirmation. In the apostolical age, the benefit in very many who received it, was immediate and conspicuous; because other ends were to be served besides the progress of private persons in the Christian life. While the Church was surrounded with heathen

unbelievers, extraordinary powers were required for their conversion: with which view, the gifts of miracles, and of speaking with tongues, were communicated by the laying on of hands. In those days, the members of the Church were not only endued with such grace as operated inwardly upon their affections for the retaining of them in the ways of Truth and Holiness, but with such power likewise as manifested itself outwardly to the senses of men, and thereby led them to consider and assent to a Religion so miraculously attested. Their prejudice was too great to be conquered by the force of Reason. The internal merits of the Gospel, and the native excellence of Truth, would have no effect on those who were incapable of discerning them. Therefore God in his great mercy condescended to the shorter method of leading their Reason and Philosophy captive, by operating upon them through the medium of their bodily senses. But when the Gospel was spread abroad in the world, and children were every where trained up under Christian parents, these extraordinary powers became unnecessary, and were consequently withdrawn. A wrong education hath such an influence upon the mind, that many persons are rendered proof against miracles and all the demonstrations which the Power and Wisdom of God can present to them. It has such an effect upon the faculties, that a good-natured man will be soured into malice and cruelty, a learned man (though surrounded with light) will be groping in darkness, and a sensible man will talk like an ideot. When this grand obstacle is removed, and people are no longer brought up to heathenism, the work of conversion may be left to Education; the mind of a child will imbibe what is offered; and as it grows to maturity,

Reason will be able to maintain what simplicity received.

On these considerations, it is not to be wondered at, that the extraordinary powers which attended Confirmation were discontinued after the establishment of Christianity, and nothing retained but those internal powers which were always requisite for the salvation of individuals, and were therefore conferred at the same time with the others. The Grace of God to dispel the darkness of the understanding, and restrain the frowardness of passion, was as necessary to those who were confirmed by St. *Peter*, St. *John*, or St. *Paul*, as to those who are confirmed in this latter Age of the Church; and therefore it is equally communicated in all times. What though the greatness of the Apostolical character may now be sunk in the eyes of those who know not how to distinguish between times and seasons; yet God, who promised to be with his Apostles to the end of the world, will not be wanting to his promise, nor leave his Church without such helps as are necessary toward the perfecting and saving of its Members. Wherefore we may safely depend upon it, that the benefit of Confirmation to the faithful receiver is as real as that of baptism; though it is not subject, in either case, to immediate observation. A learned Author, who was a man of great piety, had much experience of the world, and never was in any degree addicted to Enthusiasm, assured me, that in the course of his life, he had met with persons troubled in their consciences, who had opened to him the state of their minds, though he was not a Clergyman. It was his custom to ask such, whether they had been Confirmed? If they answered in the negative, he advised them not to defer it any longer: and said he had been witness

to an happy change in several instances. It does by no means follow from this relation, that I think signs and wonders are to be expected from the present Governors of the Church. For Confirmation is one of the ordinary means of Grace, and if it is found in some cases to answer the purpose intended, the effect is as properly within the common sphere of the Christian œconomy, as the increase of a plant from the operation of the Elements is within the common course of Nature. If the sun were to shine, the clouds to send down rain, the winds to vary according to their season, and notwithstanding all these advantages nothing should be found to grow, it would be more wonderful than any thing we have yet observed: and it would not be less wonderful, if the Institutions of God were to do no good in his Church. What? shall God establish the means of Grace amongst us, and shall no benefit attend them? Shall he confer his grace to strengthen the mind, and shall the mind be no stronger with it than without it? Doth God amuse his people with forms which have no power, and shadows which have no corresponding substance? This would be more incredible, because more opposite to the nature of God, and contradictory to Reason, than any thing that ever was or will be believed concerning an Efficacy in the Christian Institutions. To those indeed who expected nothing from them, they always were lifeless and ineffectual. The Jews, who were such only in outward profession, reduced their Law to a dead Letter; and Christians of the like spirit reduce the Gospel to an insignificant Ceremony. The Enthusiast boasts of finding a shorter road to the Grace of God without condescending to the use of the means; and the squeamish improver of the Christian Mysteries is ashamed of the Form,

unless you give him leave to suppose that it is void of the Power. But the rational Believer takes a middle way between them, neither despising the form nor denying the power of it.

Yet we must be careful not to carry things beyond their line: we must distinguish between the ordinary and extraordinary influences of the Holy Spirit.

In the beginning of the Gospel, when the hearts of the disobedient were to be turned to the wisdom of the just, and a people was to be prepared for the Lord, the progress was rapid, and the effects of the Spirit were visible and immediate. At the Formation of the World, when things were rising out of the Chaos, the Earth was hastily furnished with all its productions. Herbs were in seed, Trees had their fruits upon them, Animals had their full stature, and Man was arrived at maturity, in the space of a single day. But now, under the settled laws of Nature, all things are carried on so silently and slowly, that to vulgar Eyes they seem to stand still. The Sun and Moon in the heavens, the verdure of the Spring, the fruits of the Autumn; all are progressive in every moment; but while we look upon them their motion is insensible. So the progress of Grace, like that of nature, is not all at once, but by degrees, with a motion imperceptible to the Eyes. Yet both are real. The God who conducts the system of physical causes in such a manner as to satisfy the expectations of the Philosophical Observer, will not disappoint those who look up to him, according to his own direction, for things of much higher importance.

VI. The outward sign or form of Confirmation is the last thing described to us in that account, upon which I have been making these Remarks. We are told, that when *Peter* and *John* had first *prayed for*

the Samaritan converts, they *layed their hands on them*, and they received the Holy Ghost. We rarely or never meet with any instance of a gift communicated from God to man without some external sign to illustrate the nature of it and assure us of its reality. The water in Baptism, and the bread and wine in the Lord's supper, are applied with this intention; and the application is so strict and proper, that the whole visible world cannot supply us with any other signs so accommodated to the nature of the things signified. The *laying on of hands*, as a sign, is not restrained to Confirmation, but common to Ordination, and to other occasions, to denote the power and authority of God. *Moses* laid his hands upon the head of *Joshua* when he gave him a commission to succeed as Prophet, Pastor, and Captain, to the people of Israel. The Apostles used the same form when they healed the sick; and our blessed Saviour laid his hands on the little children when he gave them his benediction. A sign so frequently applied, and upon such important occasions, cannot be without its proper signification; and a few words will be sufficient to shew what it is.

The *hands* are the instruments of action and power. If any gift is presented, any assistance offered, or any commission given, from one man to another, the hands are the means of communication. The power of the human body is so eminently fixed to the hands, that *hand* and *power* are put for the same thing in the sacred language. And anciently among the Latins, *manumission* or *a sending away from the hand*, signified the releasing of a servant from the *power* of his master. So that if any thing is visibly communicated from God through the ministration of man, no outward sign can express this so properly as the stretch-

ing out and laying on of the hands of those persons, who act under him and for him in a ministerial capacity. Such a substitution is necessary in our present state, because we can form no idea of spiritual things without the mediation of bodily objects. *Moses*, in his ministerial character, was the Representative of God, according to what was said of him, *See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh**. In virtue of this substitution, the hand of Moses was stretched out, to signify the exertion of that divine power which effected the miracles in Egypt. All nature became obedient to the motion of his hand; not for any power it had in itself, but because the Almighty hand of God concurred with the hand of his Minister. When Christ gave his plenary commission to his Apostles after his Resurrection, he told them they should *lay hands upon the Sick*, and they should recover. The sense of which sign is referred to in the Hymn or Prayer recorded in the 4th Chap. of the *Acts*—"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, "and grant unto thy Servants, that with all bold-"ness they may speak thy word, by *stretching forth* "*thine Hand* to heal." Whence it appears, plain enough for our present purpose, that when the *hand of God* was stretched forth for any act of divine Power, it was outwardly expressed by the *hands of his ministers*. Their hands touched, but it was the hand of God which healed, confirmed, ordained, and performed such other acts as were beyond the reach of human power.

VII. That the ceremony might be effectual, the Apostles first prayed for those on whom their hands were to be laid. Notwithstanding the propriety of

* Exod. vii. 1.

the sign and the plenitude of their Commission, the effect still depended on the will of God, who expects humiliation on the part of his ministers, and whose power never was nor will be at the disposal of men but at the instance of their prayers. When the Truth of God is pledged that he will be with his Church and fulfil his promises to it, this condition is always understood, that there is a devout profession of dependence in those who distribute his gifts, and faith in those who receive them. Our Church, which retains the use of the sign, and prescribes such preparatory forms of Devotion as are suited to the occasion, is every way agreeable in its practice to the sense of the Gospel, and the example of the Apostles, when Christianity was in its purest State.

VIII. The divine Spirit is every where present. *Whither shall I go then* (saith the Psalmist) *from thy* Spirit, *or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into Heaven thou art there: If I make my bed in Hell thou art there also. If I take the Wings of the Morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea, even there shall thy Hand* (i. e. thy Spirit) *lead me, and thy right Hand shall hold me.* If we should ask how it comes to pass, that the Spirit of God is in all places, and yet not in all men; I fear the question is too deep to be answered in a satisfactory manner. I am not able to define the presence of a Spirit. My own Spirit exercises its power in a state of association with my body, so can give me no idea of Spirit in a state of Abstraction. When my mind is present to that from which my body is remote, I know not what that presence is but memory and imagination: so that my conceptions are as imperfect as before. If I consider the natural or created Spirit of the World, that brings me nearer to the properties of

the divine Spirit: for the Air, which is every where present, is moving in some places and stagnant in others; it *bloweth where it listeth*. It is the breath of life, and present to all bodies dead and alive, but it supports no respiration in a dead carcase.

The question will be more profitable, if we ask why the wisdom of God, in the distribution of his grace, hath thought fit to make use of the ministration of man? For this there are many reasons. Our condition while we are in the body requires that we should be ministered to in a bodily manner. Order and Decency require, that self-deceit, imposture, and confusion, should be prevented in the Church. But chiefly it is expedient, that our faith and submission to the Will of God should always find something to exercise them in every sacred Institution. This method of proceeding puts us to the proof, whether we will trust to the promise of God for the receiving of those gifts by other hands under his appointment, which he doth not vouchsafe to give us immediately from himself. It is thought to have been the cause of offence in Satan, that he was too proud to hold with the consequences of the Incarnation, and would not submit to worship God in the person of a man. It is now a like trial of our humility, whether we will acknowledge the power and authority of God in *men of like passions with ourselves*, whose frailty may tempt us to overlook and despise them. Some object to the validity of a divine Ordinance for the want of sufficient holiness in the Administrator. So the *Donatists* argued formerly, upon an opinion of their own sanctity above that of other men. How, said they, can any man give that which he hath not? But they received a proper answer in few words—*Humana sunt opera, sed Dei sunt munera—The works are of man,*

but the gifts are of God: he who pretends to confer them from himself mistakes the nature of his commission and profanely assumes that honour which belongs to God only.

IX. I have not insisted on this distinction, as if I thought the Clergy of the Church of England were more in need of it than any other class of Ministers in the Church. If any are not as they should be, may God make them better: but upon the whole I suppose we may stand the comparison with any other Society this day in the world. And I trust, that the same God, who when the Earth was filled with violence in the days of Noah, protected that righteous man in the building of an Ark to the saving of his house, when he was surrounded with reprobates, as ready to pull it to pieces or set fire to it as he was to build it; that the same God, I say, however wickedness and infidelity may increase in these latter days, will interpose for the government and preservation of this Church, that his people may receive all those means of grace which are requisite to prepare them for his glorious kingdom.

O Lord save thy people, and bless thine heritage. Govern them, and lift them up for ever.

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

GROWTH OF HEATHENISM

AMONG

MODERN CHRISTIANS,

IN A

LETTER TO A FRIEND AT OXFORD.

HUMBLY RECOMMENDED TO THE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF ALL THOSE WHO ARE ENTRUSTED WITH THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH.

BY A PRESBYTER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE EDITION PRINTED IN 1794.

THE Reader may be shocked when he is told, that there is a disposition to Heathenism in an age of so much improvement, and pronounce the accusation improbable and visionary; but he is requested to weigh impartially the facts here offered, and then to form his judgment. The following Letter was intended only for the inspection of a friend; but if there is any tendency in the public to such a peculiar kind of corruption, as is here pointed out, they ought to have some warning of it; and therefore it has been judged that the present publication can be neither impertinent nor unseasonable.

The present Edition of this Letter, in the year 1794, is more seasonable than the first; now we have been witness to the profane affectation of Heathen manners by the Philosophers of France; with its malignant effects on Religion, Government, and the Peace of the Christian world.

REFLECTIONS,

&c.

DEAR SIR,

A WORTHY gentleman *, who is a collector of things rare and curious in their several kinds, shewed me a large shoeing-horn, which as tradition reports had been the property of an ancient abbot of Glastonbury. This relic of antiquity is very handsomely engraved with figures representing the seven works of charity; which are, the giving of bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, lodging to strangers, visiting the sick, and prisoners, and burying the dead. On this my learned friend took occasion to remark, that in the ages before the Reformation, the subjects of the ornamental arts, which are now so universally taken from the Heathen Mythology, were then generally borrowed from the Holy Scripture, and had some pious relation to the doctrines of Christianity. Of this he shewed me another remarkable instance in the powder-horn of King Henry VIII. which is adorned with the history of St. Stephen's martyrdom, in elegant figures of ivory. Whereas, had an artist of this age been set to invent a device for a powder-horn, his imagination

* The late Rev. Mr. Gostling, of Canterbury.

would immediately have suggested to him the fall of Phæton, the Cyclops forging thunderbolts, or some like allusion to the history and effects of fire from the stores of the Heathen Mythology.

I shall not stop here to dispute which of these two sources, Paganism or Christianity, will furnish the best subjects for poets, painters, and sculptors to work upon: but I cannot help observing, that the general state of religion and manners may be judged of by the style and taste adopted in the ornamental arts. There might be a faulty superstition, with a mixture of simplicity bordering upon ignorance, in the works of former ages; but the style of them shewed that Christianity was the religion of the country, and that the several particulars of the sacred history were then held in honour, as the subjects most worthy to be offered for admiration, and recommended by all the efforts of human ingenuity.

This was certainly the persuasion of those times; but in the present age the public taste can seldom find any thing but Heathen matter to work upon: from which it is natural to infer, that Heathenism is in better repute than formerly; and thence it will follow, that the public regard to Christianity, and all that relates to it, is proportionably declined.

Polydore Virgil, in his work *De rerum inventoribus*, tells us, how in the middle ages of the Church, they christened the ceremonies of the Pagan superstition, and adapted their fables to the mysteries of the Christian worship: which observation will undoubtedly account for much of the pomp that appears in the celebrities of the modern church of Rome. There might possibly be a very good intention in thus attempting to reclaim what had been misapplied, in order to make an impression upon vulgar minds in

their own way; but there was often great weakness and want of judgment in the manner, which should never be proposed for imitation. Thus much of their humour ought to be retained, that the true religion should, in all places, and on all occasions, be seen to preserve its superiority over the false; not merely because one is better than the other, but because the one is worthy of God, and will raise honourable sentiments in men, while the other was never intended for any thing but an engine of the devil, to infuse sentiments of impurity, obscenity, pride, and vanity, dishonourable to God, and destructive to man. Yet the taste for Heathen learning, which began to prevail about the times of the Reformation, hath been productive of an evil, which hath been growing upon us for two hundred years past, and hath at length given to Heathenism the upper hand in almost every subject. The fabulous objects of the Grecian mythology have even got possession of our churches; in one of which * I have seen a monument, with elegant figures as large as the life, of the three Fates, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, spinning and clipping the thread of a great man's life: by which species of memorial, he is taken as it were out of the hands of the true God, whom we Christians worship in our churches, and turned over to the miserable blindness of Heathen destiny: not to mention the insult and profanation with which Heathen idols are brought into a Christian temple. In the same church, the baptistery or font is removed almost out of sight; and when found, has a very mean and unworthy appearance, as if it were intended for some other use:

* At the village of Wharton, near Kettering, in Northampton shire.

so natural is it for those improvements which exalt Heathenism to debase Christianity. How conspicuous are all the temples of the Heathen idols in the famous gardens of Stowe in Buckinghamshire; while the parish church, which happens to stand within the precincts, is industriously shrouded behind evergreens and other trees, as an object impertinent, or at least of no importance to a spectator of modern taste. In our rural ornaments we have temples to all the Pagan divinities; and in the city a Pantheon, wherein there is a general assembly of the sons and daughters of pleasure, under the auspices of Heathen demons *.

This taste is not only profane and corrupting whenever it takes place, but the productions of it are sometimes monstrously absurd and incongruous: it begets a certain inattention to propriety, which admits of false and shocking associations, consistent neither with goodness of taste, nor correctness of judgment. When I see the figure of a cock upon the top of a steeple, I am reminded of that sacred bird who was a monitor to St. Peter, and through his example is now giving a daily lesson to all believers. When I see the globe and cross on the top of St. Paul's, I rejoice in the exaltation of him who was humbled for our sakes, but is now the head of all principality and power to the church and to the world; and I feel a secret satisfaction in reflecting, that a cross so exalted has no reproach in it, as if the offence of it were ceased. But when I see the dragon upon Bow-steeple, I can only wonder how an emblem so expressive of the devil, and frequently introduced

* The author of these Reflections has lived to see it destroyed by fire.

as such into the temples of idolaters, found its way to the summit of a Christian edifice. I am so jealous in these matters, that I must confess myself to have been much hurt by a like impropriety in a well-known music-room, where there is an organ consecrated by a superscription to Apollo, although the praises of Jehovah are generally celebrated by it once every month in the choral performances: and it seems rather hard that Jehovah should condescend to be a borrower, while Apollo is the proprietor.

In all the sciences the tokens of this Pagan infection are very observable. In politics we hear of nothing but Brutus, and are stunned with the heroism of rebels, and the virtue of regicides. In morality, how venerable are the characters of Socrates, and Cato the suicide: while the Spartan virtue is become the grand object of patriotic emulation; though I am sure it would make a shocking figure if the moral character of that commonwealth were impartially represented on the authority of Plutarch. Botany, which in ancient times was full of the blessed Virgin Mary, and had many religious memorials affixed to it, is now as full of the Heathen Venus, the Mary of our modern virtuosi. Amongst the ancient names of plants, we find the Calceolus Mariæ, Carduus Mariæ, Carduus benedictus, our Lady's Slipper, our Lady's Thistle, our Lady's Mantle, the Alchymilla, &c. but modern improvements have introduced the Speculum Veneris, Labrum Veneris, Venus's Looking-glass, Venus's Basin (the Dipsacus), Venus's Navel-wort, Venus's Fly-trap, and such like: and whereas the ancient botanists took a pleasure in honouring the memory of the Christian saints with their St. John's wort, St. Peter's wort, herb Gerard, herb Christopher, and many others; the modern ones, more affected to

their own honour, have dedicated several newly-discovered genera of plants to one another; of which the Hottonia, the Sibthorpia, are instances, with others so numerous and familiar to men of science, that they need not be specified.

But in poetry, the servility of Christians is most notorious of all. Here they follow as implicitly as if the Heathen Muses had deprived them of their wits. If any machinery is to be introduced, it must all be according to the Heathen model, by a law as invariable as that of the Medes and Persians. But it should be considered, that when an Heathen poet made use of his divine machinery, he only spoke as he believed, introducing such powers into his verse as he professed to worship in prose. After he had been offering sacrifices in the temple of Minerva, it was natural for him to bring her in to the assistance of his hero: but when a Christian moralist does the same, proposing a pattern of virtue on the Heathen plan for the purposes of education, he goes out of his way, to adopt what he knows to be as absurd in itself as it is contrary to his profession. If there is a natural opposition between truth and falsehood, we are now as irrational in betraying a partiality to the profane objects of Heathenism, as the Heathens themselves would have been, had they shewn the like regard to the sacred objects of the Bible; only with this difference, that they would have taken up what was better than their own, whereas we incline to that which is worse: their choice would have brought them nearer to God; ours brings us nearer to the Devil. How strange would it have been, if while their temples were dedicated to Venus, Mars, and Bacchus, their gardens had been adorned with statues of Moses and Aaron, the walls of their houses

painted with the destruction of Sodom, the overthrow of Pharaoh, the delivery of the two tables on Mount Sinai, and such like subjects of sacred history! Who would not have inferred in such a case, that their temples were frequented out of form, while their inclinations were toward the law of Moses, and the God of the Hebrews? The Heathen priests would never have been silent on such an occasion: they would have exclaimed against this double-faced disaffection, and have given the alarm against all that were guilty of it, as persons ready to apostatize from the religion of their ancestors. But alas! no Heathens were ever found to be thus inconsistent: they were faithful to their profession, and with one mind abominated every thing that was Jewish, for the relation it bore to the Jewish worship; always railing against that nation as low and contemptible, and their religion as foolish and superstitious. We also should be as sincere in our profession as they were in theirs, and should express our aversion against folly and profaneness wherever they occur, unless our intellects were vitiated with false wisdom from the common forms of education. To take little things for great, and great for little, is the worst misfortune that can befal the human understanding. The machinery of Heathenism appears great to scholars, because it has been described by great wits of antiquity with great words and musical verses; and being offered very early to the mind at school, there is a natural prepossession in favour of it. But is there really any thing great in the character of Æolus, shutting up the winds in a den? In Vulcan the blacksmith, hammering thunderbolts with his one-eyed journeymen? In Neptune, a man living under water like a fish, and flourishing a pitch-fork to still the raging of the sea? If these things are

taken literally, according to that poetical character in which the ancient writers used them, and in which only they are adopted by the moderns, they are so mean and ridiculous, that when the Heathens were pressed with them after the commencement of the Gospel, they could find no way of upholding their dignity, but by resolving them into their physical character; that is, by accommodating them to the powers and operations of nature, to which they alluded with a sort of mystical resemblance*.

Notwithstanding all this, such is the attachment to the Heathen models, that Boileau lays it down as a principle in epic poetry, that no grandeur of description can be attained without introducing Jupiter, Juno, Pallas, Neptune, with the whole tribe of Pagan divinities: and if any Christian should be deterred by a sense of his profession from making use of these *ancient ornaments*, as he calls them, his scruples can be ascribed to nothing but a vain and superstitious fear. And indeed our poets have generally assented to this doctrine of Boileau, without finding themselves much embarrassed by the terrors of Christian superstition; insomuch that if any stranger were to judge of our religion from the practice of our poets and tragedians, he would take Paganism for the established religion of the country. For besides hymns to Venus and Bacchus, and Wood Nymphs, and Water Nymphs †, we see virtues and attributes impersonated and deified as they were of old: we have odes to Liberty, odes to Health, odes to Contentment; in which

* This is done at large by Phurnatus, in his book Περι θεων φυσεως, published in Gale's Opuscula Mythologica.

† The last thing that occurred to me of this kind, was, a prayer of poor Phyllis Wheatley, the Negro poetess, to Neptune, entreating his providence to preserve her friend in a voyage.

Health is prayed to for health, and Contentment is intreated to give contentment, that is, to be the cause of itself; with many other absurdities, in which the licence of poetry is not very consistent with common sense, and much less with the sense of religion.

What is more common with poets than to make a compliment of the creation to Jupiter? and consequently of all those sovereign attributes of power, wisdom, and goodness, which are displayed in the works of nature; especially in the formation of the human species? Of this we have a specimen in the following lines by the late celebrated Dean of St. Patrick's.

> When Cupid did his grandsire Jove entreat
> To form some beauty by a new receipt:
> * * * * * *
> Jove mixt up all, and his best clay employ'd,
> Then call'd the happy composition Floyd.

If a Latin poet celebrates the nativity and genius of some learned man, Lucina presides at his birth, and brings him safely into the world; the Muses are his nurses, Minerva teaches him, and Phœbus inspires him. When his death is to be lamented, what can his surviving friend say for him, on poetical principles, but wish himself Orpheus, that so with his lyre he might go down to hell, and prevail on Pluto (the keeper of all dead Christians *) to restore him back again? This is the poor trite stuff, which hath now been repeated for some ages past: the Heathen Deities

* The public has been informed, that a procession after the mode of the Heathen funeral rites, was lately celebrated with great pomp, instead of Christian burial: in which procession, the heart of a dead Christian was carried through the Elysian Fields to soft music, and placed with proper solemnity in a very conspicuous Mausoleum.

have been the objects of poetical gratitude, and the Heathen fables the sources of poetical consolation! Such poets must excuse me, if I remind them of their error in words like those of the Apostle; "O foolish Christians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should return to these beggarly elements, before whom Jesus Christ hath been set forth, as alive from the dead? Having begun in Christianity, are ye to be made perfect by Heathenism? Have ye suffered so many persecutions, and are ye now going back to those idols, for whose sakes ye were appointed as sheep to the slaughter? The folly which returned from the freedom of the Gospel back to the bondage of the law, was nothing when compared to that which trifles with Omnipotence, and gives to idols and devils the honour due only to the true God."

For the origin of poetry, Boileau, the French critic can go no higher than to the Heathen Oracles:

> "These miracles from numbers did arise,
> Since which in verse heaven taught his mysteries;
> And by a priest possess'd with rage divine,
> Apollo spoke from his prophetic shrine."
>
> *Dryden's Transl.*

How serious is this! One would think Apollo had written the Bible; or at least that the oracular verses of Heathen diviners were prior to the sacred songs of the Scripture, and of equal authority. But when great wits are transported into the fabulous regions of poetry, they become insensible of the wickedness of diabolical imposture (for such was the practice at the

Some years ago, a Bacchanalian festival was celebrated, and sacred rites performed before the idol of Bacchus, at the same place; the particulars of which are preserved in some public prints of that time.

shrines of Apollo) and forget what they owe to truth, reason, and revelation.

I think Milton hath made it appear, that what is great in poetry may well be attained without borrowing any thing from the ancient ornaments of the Pagan machinery: and indeed his poem of Paradise Lost never sinks below itself more effectually, than when he condescends to treat his subject in the Heathen phrase, and embellish it with Heathen allusions, as where Adam and Eve are compared to Jupiter and Juno*; which is so foreign and unnatural, that the imagination being shocked with the impropriety, becomes incredulous, and then the pleasure of reading is lost. Perhaps it may be imputed to the formality of Puritanism, that his poem was not still more deformed with the impertinent ornaments of profane literature. In that age, the religion and morality of the classical writers, had not obtained quite so much authority as afterwards, when they were called in to give their sanction to heresy, and to corrupt the highest mysteries of the Christian faith. Then was the pernicious example of Cato set up, who hath been followed ever since as a pattern of suicide, because the sin was unfortunately varnished over by the sentiments and diction of that elegant scholar Mr. Addison; who spoke of "treading on classical ground" with that veneration, with which the palmers and pilgrims of the twelfth century visited the Holy Land, which had been the scene of our blessed Saviour's miracles.

Who does not know, that Heathen fragments are now sought after as zealously as Christian relics were collected in former ages? There was a time when

* Book iv. 499.

all the curious people of this nation were alarmed and animated if the bones of some ancient hermit were found, or some treatise recovered and added to the works of a legendary writer. Now the like alarm is spread, if an Etruscan vault is opened, and some old broken pitchers are brought to light, with grotesque ill-designed figures upon them. When some great men, famous for their parts and learning, have distinguished themselves by a taste for Heathen principles and Heathen curiosities, the whole tribe of inferiors follows them of course, as the vulgar on all other occasions submit readily to fashion; the common rule of those who have no judgment. That the study of antiquity is not entertaining and curious, I do not mean to say; neither would I suggest that it is without its use; for certainly it is both useful and reputable to know many things which it is not necessary to admire: but some minds are so ill prepared to make proper distinctions, that their curiosity rises insensibly to a religious veneration, too often attended with a disaffection toward every thing that relates to the Christian character.

It is much to be lamented, that while we are learning from the scholars of profane antiquity, the beauties of imagery, the graces of diction, the arts of oratory, and the harmony of poetry, we are not better upon our guard against their principles, which steal upon us through the vehicles of poetry and oratory, till our taste is wholly vitiated, and the glorious realities of the Christian revelation become insipid and insignificant.

Experience shews how difficult it is to dwell with delight upon the expressions of Heathen writers, without embracing too many of their sentiments. When a painter hath exhibited Thais with all her

charms, he that values the lines of the picture, and admires the skill of the master, may very possibly be tempted to lust after the original, though he is apprized before-hand that she is an infamous and abandoned strumpet.

Dr. Middleton confesses in one of his letters, that his classical engagements had rendered him very squeamish in his theological studies; and I am well convinced this has been the case with many others, who from having their brains filled with Heathen notions, and their affections touched with the vanity of conscious erudition, have contracted a nausea toward the Bible and its contents; first disrelishing, and at length deliberately opposing, the Christian doctrines; perhaps without being sensible how their minds were originally debauched. If this experiment is fatal in so many instances, and dangerous in all, it is an alarming consideration, that the first ideas conceived by school-boys are for the most part of the Heathen stamp: and I fear they are too seldom instructed in due season concerning the infinite difference between the true God and the false *. I was told once by a school-boy, that one of his companions asked him very seriously, which was the uppermost, Jupiter or God Almighty? And well might the poor child be ignorant of the distinction, when his elders, who ought to have had more judgment, have made some foul mistakes in the same way; such as that in the Universal Prayer of Mr. Pope, which gives us a new sort of levelling Theology, unknown to the wisdom

* This caution hath been laudably observed by the judicious editor of the *Selectæ è profanis Scriptoribus Historiæ*, who hath prefaced his collection by such admonitions and distinctions as would render the present strictures superfluous, if they were more generally attended to.

of former ages. When the Jewish nation was called out by the prophet Elijah to be spectators of the grandest dispute the world ever saw, that is, to determine whether Jehovah or Baal was the proper object of religious adoration, Mr. Pope could have settled it all in a word or two, only by instructing the parties that the true God is worshipped in every climate by those who worship any God at all: that the Saint, the Savage, and the Sage, the Hebrew, the Hottentot, and the Greek philosopher, were the votaries of one and the same Divinity. How mistaken were the poor Christians under all the Roman persecutions, in throwing away their lives upon a distinction which had no existence! They were brought before the altar of Jupiter, and the usual alternative was proposed, either to suffer death or signify their adoration. Had either party been aware of the new levelling principle, they might have been reconciled without proceeding to these extremities, and have joined amicably in the same sacrifices. Thus much however we may conclude for certain, that if the poet had been in the like circumstances, he could not possibly have been a martyr, if he believed his own doctrine.

The pious and excellent author of the Night Thoughts, who writes as a Christian moralist, hath been tempted by the force of custom to transgress that rule of sound criticism, which obliges us to make every composition uniform and of a piece. What occasion had he thus to adopt the Heathen style "that more than miracle the *Gods* indulge *." Why gods in the plural? Why must they have the honour of working miracles? And why are the Holy

* Night IId.

Angels of God, and the red-faced Bacchus of Paganism, brought together in the same poem? Which, to say nothing of the impiety of it, can never be reconciled to the rules of propriety and good writing. If we write as Christians, let us keep up to the style of our profession: if our scene is laid upon Heathen ground, then let us take the language of the Heathen writers—*Sit quod vis simplex duntaxat et unum.* The Levitical law forbad the people to plough with an ox and an ass together; and the New Testament, taking up the same principle, commands us not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. All I contend for here is consistency and propriety; and I am sure the judgment of the best critics will bear me out in what I have said.

The case of the primitive martyrs, who chose rather to die than do honour to the Heathen Deities, brings to my remembrance a circumstance which lessens my admiration of those antique statues, which, as the productions of genius, are otherwise very much to be admired for elegance of design and truth of proportion. In times of persecution it was the custom with the bigots of Heathenism to drag the Christians up to the images of their idol-gods, either to offer sacrifice or be put to death: whence it is by no means improbable, that the blood of many innocent Christians may have been barbarously shed to the honour of some statues now in high esteem with modern virtuosi of the same Christian profession; who, for a little excellence of workmanship, admire and respect what their purer predecessors had reason to regard with horror and detestation *.

* We have heard it observed, that the Statues of Heathen Deities have been generally found under the earth with their faces down-

Where at last will this taste, which hath been prevailing and increasing for so many years, from the days of Lord Herbert to the late erection of the Pantheon, where, I say, will it lead us? Where can it lead us, but to indifference and atheism? A Christian corrupted with Heathen affections, degenerates into something worse than the original Heathens of antiquity. They had great faith in such gods as they knew; depended upon them devoutly; and applied to them on every public occasion, either of deprecation or thanksgiving. If we except the Epicureans, they insisted almost universally on a special providence, directing things *pro re natâ;* and were assured that the gods were the avengers of perjury and impiety. But faith in the divine protection, and fear of divine vengeance, are but coldly regarded, and rarely to be met with in many of their modern disciples. Sacrifice was practised by them, as the essential part of religion, for the expiation of private or national guilt: but when the Christian sacrifice is neglected, and the Heathen sacrifices are exploded, nothing remains but a religion without expiation; a thing which never existed since the expulsion of Adam from Paradise, till it was begotten of late time in Socinus, and his followers; when Christian lukewarmness engendered with the pride and ignorance of gentile philosophy.

While we have been considering the case of poets, orators, and artists, how they all stand affected to

ward: which renders it probable, that after the conversion of the empire, such Statues had been purposely buried out of the way by the zeal and piety of the primitive Christians. How surprisingly are times altered! We now hear Mr. Gibbon blaming Christians for not intermixing the *elegant* and *innocent* rites of Paganism with their own worship!

Heathenism; I had almost forgotten the philosophers, I mean the natural philosophers, whose science for an hundred years past, hath been claiming kindred with the Heathen divinity. About the year 1680, it was observed by an eminent scholar of that time, that the exact and scrutinising spirit of the school-divinity was become necessary, in order to detect the pretensions of some "who were ready by the study of nature to immerse God in matter, and with those impieties of Democritus and Epicurus, to confound him with nature." In the year 1685, Mr. Boyle, in a treatise intitled, "A free Inquiry into the vulgarly received notion of Nature," expressed an apprehension that the same doctrine was likely to gain ground amongst us; and he gave the alarm to the public in the following emphatic language, which merits well to be considered. "Nor are Christians themselves so much out of danger of being seduced by these Heathenish notions about an intelligent world (the stoical *anima mundi,)* but that even in these times there is lately sprung up a sect of men, as well professing Christianity as pretending to philosophy; who, (if I be not misinformed of their doctrine) do very much symbolize with the ancient Heathens, and talk much indeed of God, but mean such a one as is not really distinct from the animated and intelligent universe; but is on that account very differing from the true God whom we Christians believe and worship. And though I find the leaders of this sect to be looked upon by some more witty than knowing men, as the discoverers of unheard-of mysteries in physics and natural theology, yet their hypothesis does not at all appear to me to be new," &c. Then he proceeds to shew, that this philosophical God, which is not essentially different from Nature, was the Deity of the

Heathen philosophers, citing such passages as that of Seneca, *Nihil natura sine Deo est, nec Deus sine natura, sed* IDEM *est uterque.*

How near the expressions of our Doctor Halley approach to an avowal of this Heathen opinion in his eulogium on the Newtonian philosophy, let any impartial person judge, when he has considered the sense of them. And here let me observe by the way, that it is to no purpose for any man to tell us that these things are popular, and must not be spoken against: they ought to be spoken against for that very reason; because the whole world does not afford a greater temptation to error than long established popularity; on which consideration, all men who wish to chain down others to their own favourite errors, are for ever ringing this popularity in their ears. To go on therefore with Doctor Halley, whose sentiments concerning God and Nature, are communicated in the following lines:

> En tibi norma poli, et divæ libramina Molis,
> Computus en Jovis, et quas, dum primordia rerum
> Conderet, omnipotens sibi leges ipse Creator
> Dixerit———

Here the *Moles,* or mass of matter which constitutes the world, has the epithet *diva* ascribed to it, which makes it divine: and in another part of the same poem the epithet is given to Nature,

> ———jamque abdita DIÆ
> Claustra patent NATURÆ———

Then the *computus Jovis,* or calculation of Jupiter, supposing it to allude to the motions of the heavenly bodies, must imply that the visible world is Jupiter, as it stands in the Heathen poet—*Jupiter est quod-*

cunque vides: and this seems farther evident from the sentiment which is explanatory of it, viz. that the Creator (supposing Jupiter to be he) gave laws to himself; which is true if God and Nature are the same thing; because in that case the laws given to *Nature,* will be laws imposed upon *God.* The Psalmist, who distinguishes rightly between the works and the work-master, says, "he gave *them* a law which shall not be broken:" and Mr. Boyle, in his treatise above referred to, hath well remarked, that "God when he made the world, and established the laws of motion, gave them to Matter, and not to himself*;" as if he had been censuring that expression of Dr. Halley, which has been the subject of our present animadversion.

If any other philosophers have been betrayed by the authority of great names, into the belief of this strange doctrine, it cannot be wondered at, if such are found but badly disposed for the reception of the Christian mysteries: for what concord hath Heathen Jupiter with the Christian Trinity? What arguments can be strong enough to persuade those men of a divine co-equal personality in the Godhead, who have relapsed into the reveries of Stoicism, and are the votaries of an *anima mundi,* an intelligent universe, a Deity immersed in matter? To such, the notion of a co-eternal Son of God, Creator of all things that exist, and who shall be still the same when nature shall wax old, and the heavens shall vanish away, must of necessity be contemptible and incredible: and this I apprehend to be one reason why we have so many Arians among the professed admirers of natural philosophy, thus falsely understood.

* Edit. 1685-6, p. 158.

Let it not be said that I take any pleasure in censuring: a captious censor is an odious character. If the question should be put to me, "who made thee a ruler and a judge?" I am ready to answer for myself, that I shall never wish to rule where so few are inclined to obey; and that I shall never judge where my duty will permit me to excuse. I see my country hasting to ruin on many different principles; and I point out one of them, which is the most pernicious of all, if it is not in fact the mother of all the rest. I only say what must be said by somebody, if we are ever to be reclaimed from the perilous consequences of Pagan corruption: if not, *liberavi animam meam.* Should any person ask me how Christianity is to be banished out of Christendom, as the predictions of the Gospel give us reason to expect it will be, I should make no scruple to answer, that it will certainly be brought to pass by this growing affection to Heathenism*. And therefore it is devoutly to be wished that some censor would arise with the zeal and spirit of Martin Luther, to remonstrate effectually against this indulgence of Paganism, which is more fatal to the interests of Christianity than all the abuses purged away at the Reformation. This is now the grand abuse, against which the zeal of a Luther, and the wit of an Erasmus, ought to be directed: it is the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, even in the sanctuary of Christianity, and is a worse offence than all the profanations that ever happened to the Jewish temple. In the mean time, till the world shall be blessed with such a monitor, I have presumed to claim some freedom of thought, and

* Is not this conjecture of the Author, in the year 1776, now confirmed, by what hath lately happened in France?

liberty of speech, against the tyranny of prevailing fashion: and you will pardon me if I confess to you, upon this occasion, the mean opinion I have long entertained of some modern refinements; insomuch that I could wish many of them were exchanged for a little of that religious simplicity, which placed the seven works of charity upon the shoeing-horn of the Abbot of *Glastonbury*.

I am, dear Sir,
Your's, most faithfully,
and affectionately.

N.B. An Abbot of Glastonbury was hanged at the place, for denying the supremacy of Henry VIII. when his effects were confiscated; and perhaps this article might have been found amongst them.

END OF VOL. II.

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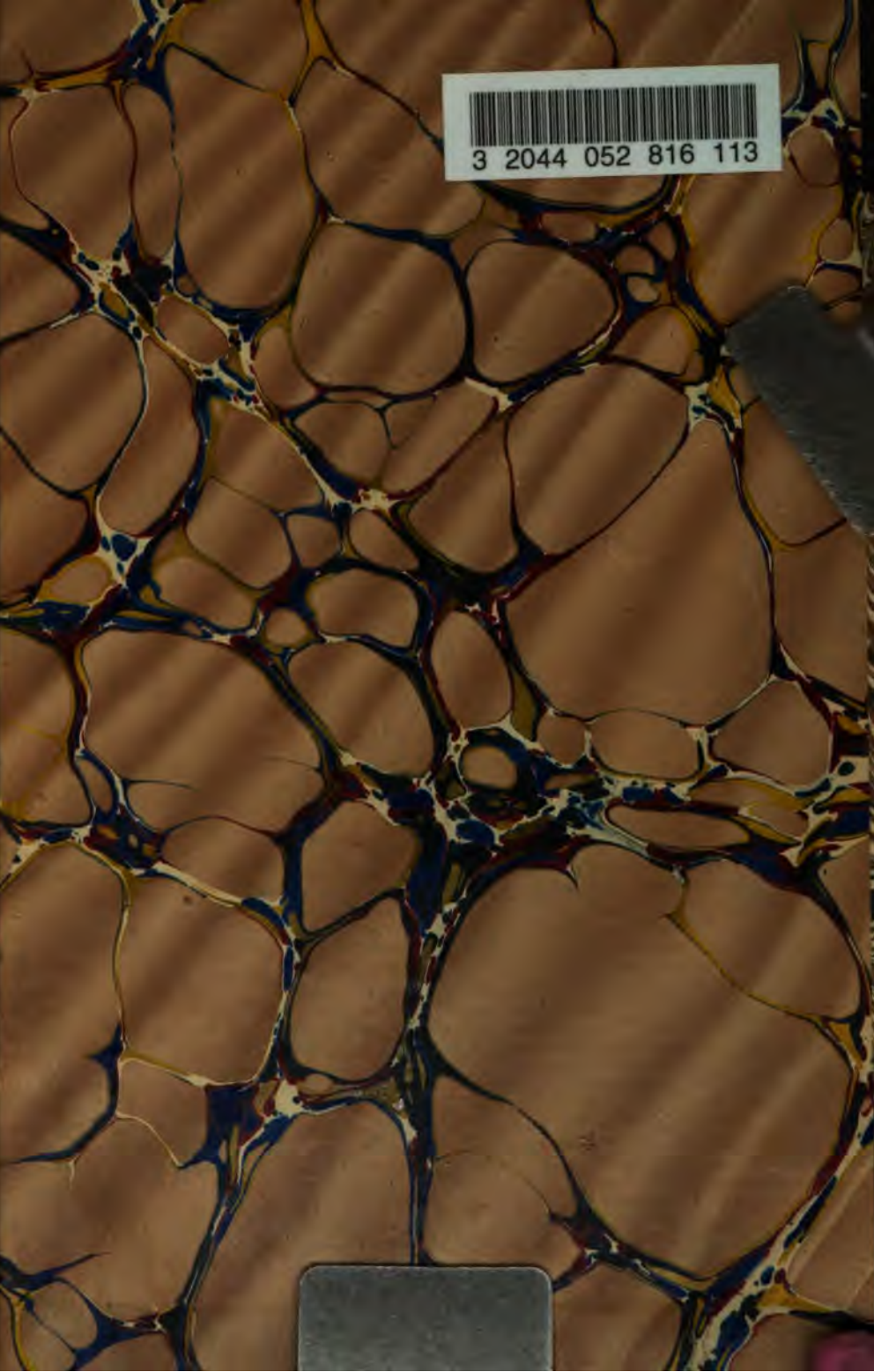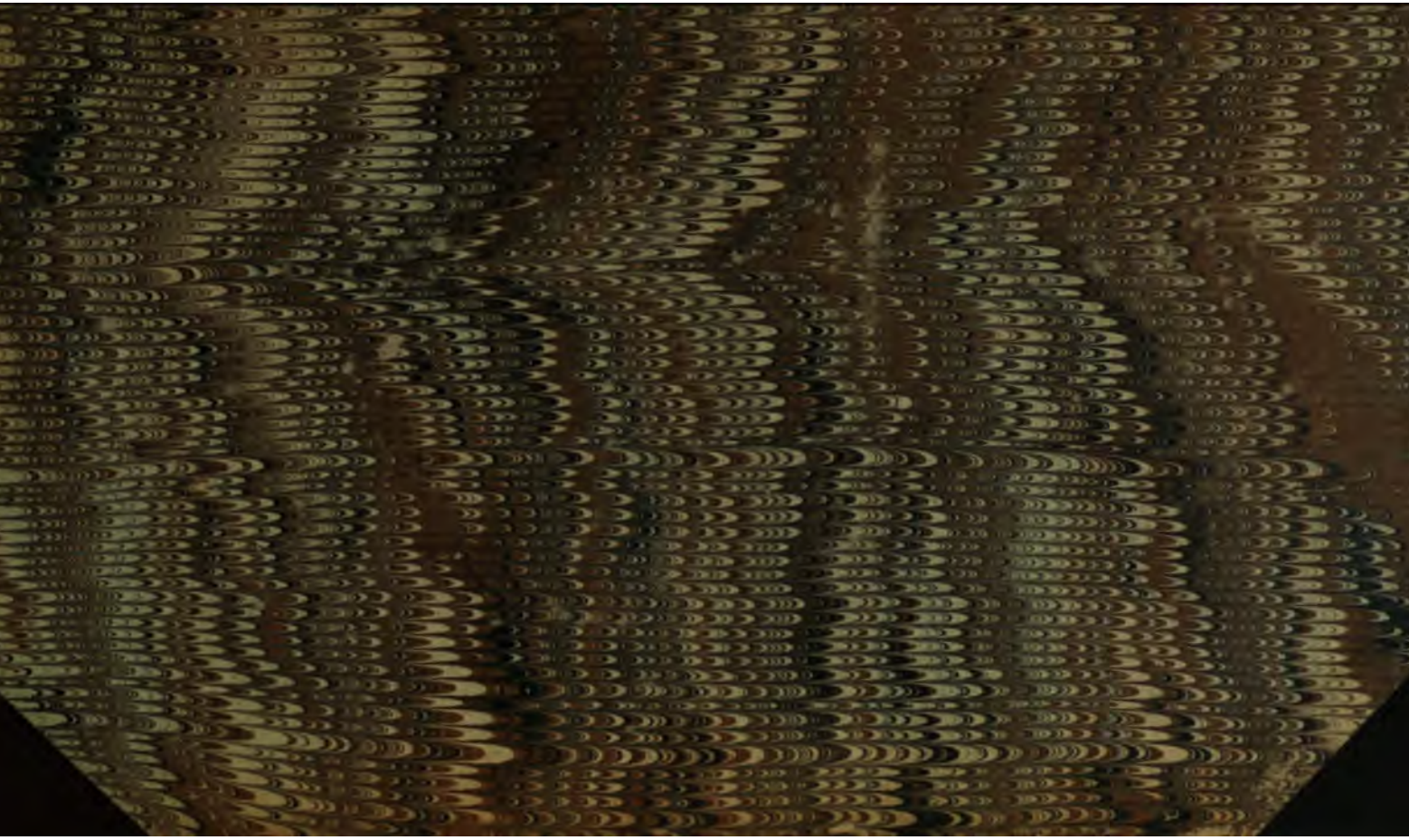
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